# Encounter

**On Leaving Cambridge** Kingsley Amis

**Hugh Gaitskell** Roy Jenkins

**Connolly's Feast** Richard Ellmann

Bernard Berenson **Letters**

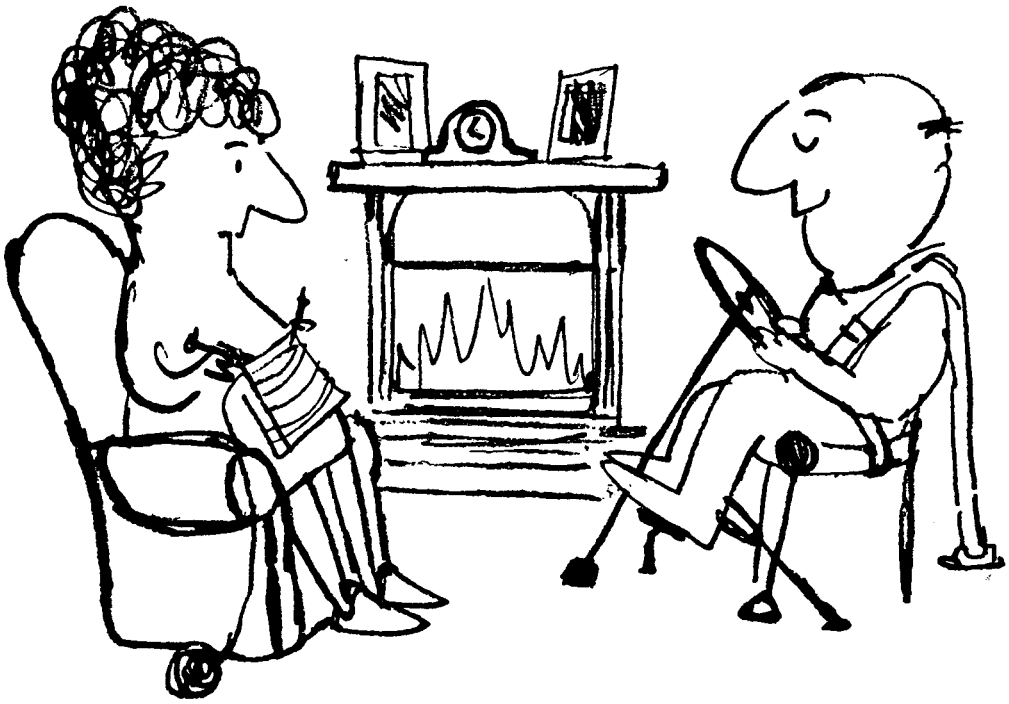
**Lenin & Inessa Armand** Bertram D. Wolfe

edited by **Stephen Spender & Melvin J. Lasky**

February 1964
monthly 4s **125**

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*Carless driving*



I know a man who has no car,
And often drives it fast and far,
But yet he never runs on Shell
—No car without goes quite as well.

**Go well–go Shell**

SHELL

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Encounter

*Edited by* STEPHEN SPENDER *and* MELVIN J. LASKY

FEBRUARY 1964 VOL. XXII NO. 2

ASSISTANT EDITORS: *Margot Walmsley, John Mander, John Gross.* CIRCULATION & ADVERTISING: *John Hall*

*Published monthly at 25 Haymarket London SW1. 4s a copy (USA & Canada 75c. India Rs.1.50). Postage: 6d. Annual subscription (inc. postage): 50s.: USA & Canada $8.50: India Rs.18. Six months: 27s.: $4.50: Rs.11. Subscription & Trade department: Rolls House Publishing Co. Ltd. Breams Buildings London EC4 (Holborn 5708). US & Canadian subscriptions may be entered with British Publications Inc. 30 East 60th Street New York 22 US newsstand distribution by Gordon & Gotch (USA) Inc. 415 Madison Ave. New York 17 (Plaza 5–5133). Second-class mail privileges authorised at the Post Office New York N.Y.* © *1964 by Encounter Ltd.*


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| HUGH GAITSKELL | 3 | *Roy Jenkins* |
| ONLY THE BEST (Story) | 11 | *Dan Jacobson* |
| NO MORE PARADES | 23 | *Kingsley Amis* |
| SOME LETTERS | 28 | *Bernard Berenson* |
| ON THE LONG ROAD | 41 | *Ezekiel Mphahlele* |
| **POETRY** | | |
| VIOLET | 10 | *Jon Silkin* |
| DREAM FLOWERS | 22 | *Kathleen Raine* |
| THROUGHOUT OUR LANDS | 46 | *Czeslaw Milosz* |
| AT CWMRHYDYCEIRW QUARRY | 66 | *Vernon Watkins* |
| **FILM** | | |
| CRITICS IN THE DARK | 50 | *Lawrence Alloway* |
| **NOTES & TOPICS** | | |
| CROSS CHANNEL | 56 | *Richard Mayne* |
| LETTER FROM CUBA | 57 | *Ernst Halperin* |
| **BOOKS** | | |
| PALINURUS AT SIXTY | 67 | *Richard Ellmann* |
| MARK TWAIN AS HAMLET | 70 | *David Daiches* |
| OTHER PEOPLE'S VALUES | 76 | *Anthony Hartley* |
| SHAW, THE VICTORIAN | 78 | *David Morse* |
| RAGS & RICHES | 80 | *P. N. Furbank* |
| **FROM THE OTHER SHORE** | | |
| LENIN & INESSA ARMAND | 83 | *Bertram D. Wolfe* |
| **LETTERS** | 92 | |
| **AUTHORS** | 96 | |


PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# children as writers

*A strange place*
*A place unknown*
*Only a stones throw*
*From the Human race.*

*It is not deep*
*It is not wide*
*It is not tall*
*Or small.*

*This place you shall never find*
*For it is mine and mine alone.*
*Strangest of all*
*No place is so unknown*

A twelve-year-old boy wrote that poem. It was one of 24,550 entries in the 1963 Daily Mirror Children's Literary Competition. Some were poems. Some were stories. Some were just children talking on paper. All the winning entries have been published and now we are organising the *sixth* competition. We're doing it because the dream of getting into print will make a lot more children sit down and write *creatively*. And we believe that's an important part of their education. **Daily Mirror.**

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*Roy Jenkins*

# Hugh Gaitskell

## *A Political Memoir*

MY FRIENDSHIP with Hugh Gaitskell, although it arose out of politics, was not primarily a political one. To a substantial extent it could, I think, have survived prolonged political disagreement or even complete separation. Yet the Gaitskell I knew was always a leading politician. When I first saw him he was already a departmental Minister. I have no clear recollection of speaking to him before he was Chancellor of the Exchequer. And during the years when I knew him best and saw him most frequently he was a highly dominant leader of the Opposition, living under the constant pressure of public events.

Unlike many of his friends, who knew him in much earlier days, I did not see Gaitskell develop from obscurity to fame. When I knew him he was always in the centre of events, and most of his triumphs and failures were political ones. But not all of them. At times he dominated politics. But he was rarely dominated by them. This was not primarily because of the range of his interests, although that was considerable, and not at all because he had any peculiar quality of unconcern; on the contrary he was easily emotionally involved. The true reason was the immensely high priority which he always gave to matters of personal relationship. He cared desperately about his friends, and the small change of social intercourse assumed an unusual importance in his life. In the midst of a period of high success he could be temporarily but deeply cast down by the unexpected failure of some small private event to which he had been looking forward. As a result, he conspicuously lacked that quality of cool, tough, detachment from individual affections which is often considered essential for a leading politician. He could be blind to the faults of those whom he liked and equally blind to the virtues of those he did not—and in neither case was he in the least influenced by a calculation of who could be useful to him. He would sometimes throw away political allies with an extraordinary recklessness, yet he clung to personal friendship with a persistent loyalty.

ALL THIS SOUNDS like a recipe for careless and attractive failure in politics. Yet Gaitskell was cheated of the highest achievement only by the tragedy of his illness and death. Even without its natural fulfilment, however, his life in politics was one of outstanding success. At forty-nine he achieved the leadership of a major party, and did so at a time when formidable rivals were thicker on the ground than they are to-day. During the seven years for which he held this office he consistently opted for strong leadership. This was not a question of the force of his personality, or of any desire to dominate. It was simply that he believed it was his duty to make up his mind before rather than after his followers. He always pointed the way and asked them to follow. The result was that the Gaitskell era was an adventurous one in Labour Party history. The leader engaged in a continuous dialogue with the party of which he was the head. But this, while it does not make for a calm life, is the essence of strong demo-

HUGH GAITSKELL, *after a short, sudden illness, died in London a year ago (Friday evening, January 18th, 1963). He had been the Labour Party's "Leader of the Opposition" for seven years.*



PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cratic leadership. It is only then that great changes in the outlook of a party or a nation can be carried through. It is only then that a leader in opposition, without the prospect of immediate office (and this was Gaitskell's position during most of his seven-year tenure) can make as great an impact as any minister upon opinion and events. This latter effect Gaitskell undoubtedly achieved. Mild-mannered ex-don though he may have appeared at the date of election, he became better known to the general public than any former leader of the opposition who had never been Prime Minister.

Both at the higher level of influencing events and at the lower one of household fame, therefore, Gaitskell, in spite of his lack of professionalism and his privately, rather than publicly, oriented personality, was a successful, even a memorable leader. What were the qualities which made him this, and how did they develop during the last decade of his life?

HIS FIRST BREAK-THROUGH to fame was when he became Chancellor of the Exchequer at the age of forty-four. This promotion came unexpectedly, almost casually. Previously he had been a quietly competent departmental minister and assistant to Cripps at the Treasury. His sudden elevation to one of the first three positions in the Government owed everything to the confidence of those with whom he had worked closely and almost nothing to his public standing. Even as Chancellor his public fame was limited. It was during the summer of 1951 that an incident, which he subsequently liked to relate, occurred in a London restaurant. Gaitskell was lunching with friends when a woman came across and asked if he would give her his autograph for her schoolboy son. By no means displeased, he smilingly obliged. "Thank you very much," she said. "My son will be so pleased. You see, he has always wanted to be a lawyer, and he admires you more than almost anyone else, Sir Hartley."

While he was at the Exchequer luck ran steadily against him. The government as a whole was tired. Its majority was tiny. The Korean War and the rearmament programme which followed from it brought vast economic difficulties. Aneurin Bevan, the most popular minister with the Labour Party activists, was restless and looking to the years of opposition which seemed to lie inevitably ahead. In these circumstances a young Chancellor, without any particular following of his own, might have been expected to play for safety. Instead, Gaitskell showed a determination verging on stubbornness. He emerged as the one strong man of the Labour Government's last year. He made enemies, but a public reputation as well.

When the Government went out, however, it looked as though his position might not hold. Nearly all the other leading figures in the Labour Party had experience in opposition. Gaitskell had none. Before the war he had been a don and during the war a Civil Servant. As a minister he might be very good, but surely he, more than most, worked best with the smooth support of the Whitehall machine and would be lost without it.

THIS PROGNOSIS proved to be the reverse of the truth. In office everything came easily to him and he was a moderate success. In opposition he had to fight a long, often disagreeable battle to establish his position, but he eventually stood out as the dominant politician of his generation.

First, he had to take the decision to compete. In Parliament this was easy enough. For a time, at any rate, his role there was secure. But it needed to be buttressed by a position in the party outside which he did not at that stage possess. That meant that he had to make a place for himself as a Labour Party conference figure. The temptation not to try for this—at any rate for a time—would for many people have been overwhelming. In 1952, the first year of opposition, with Bevanism firmly in the constituency saddle, the conference was much more a demonstration against the Right of the party than a deliberative assembly. In theory, Gaitskell could easily have stood aside. There have frequently been Labour ministers almost but not quite of the first rank, who have been active in Parliament, but have steered clear of the rougher arena of the party conference.

Gaitskell, however, was prevented from following this course by two factors. First, he could never bear to contract out of conflict. Perhaps surprisingly for a man of gentle manners and quiet charm, he was fascinated by it. He did not positively like rough interchanges and political in-fighting, as Ernest Bevin or Aneurin Bevan appeared to do, but he could not keep away from them. Morally, he was in the bravest of all categories: he flinched, but he always went on. He disliked the noise, but he never kept away from the place where the guns were firing loudest.

Second, he had a shrewd sense of power and

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

realised that without establishing a position in the conference he could never achieve the commanding role in the Labour Party to which his other talents seemed to entitle him. Accordingly, in 1952, in the dismal resort of Morecambe and at the most bitter and snarling of all such assemblies, there began the curious love-hate relationship between Gaitskell and the Labour conference which was to dominate much of the rest of his life.

THAT YEAR he was heavily defeated for the National Executive Committee. He followed this up by the challenge of his Stalybridge speech. This was delivered on his way back from Morecambe and seemed at the time to be an act of almost foolhardy defiance. Many were muttering that the Labour Party was slipping into an irresponsible extremism which would condemn it to a long period of sterility, and that Communist infiltration was doing much to stir up this mood. Gaitskell said in public these things others were merely whispering. By so doing he made himself the most exposed man in the party, who looked for the moment as though he could never again be acceptable to the bulk of its opinion. Exposed, as prominences always are, he had certainly become, but he had also taken a big step towards becoming the recognised leader of that moderate section of the party, which, particularly as elections approach, almost always triumphs. Henceforward, there could be no question of his being thought of as merely a "technocratic" minister, a sort of substitute Civil Servant who had been pushed up quickly because he was good at running a department. He had become a political power in his own right.

IN THE MEANTIME, Gaitskell was rapidly increasing his parliamentary stature. R. A. Butler was at the Exchequer and he was Shadow Chancellor. Although they were both accused of the besetting party sin of "Butskellism," economic debates during this period were conducted at a higher level and with more interest on both sides than in any other period since the war. Gaitskell's annual reply to the Budget became a regular parliamentary *tour de force*, listened to with rapt attention by a packed House. For the first time in these speeches there were shown to the full those qualities which became characteristic of his parliamentary oratory at its best: a very full knowledge of the subject, presented with a relentless logic, which avoided aridity because of the emotional force, never shrill or bitter, which lay behind it. In addition, I think that, at this time, he had a more successful and more frequently applied lighter touch than in later years.

During this first period of opposition it was also possible to see Gaitskell's quality of leadership, exercised at first on a fairly intimate stage. Still very much an economic specialist, he worked closely with a group of four or five lieutenants, one or two of whom had distinctly uncompromising personalities. Private relations were very close amongst the group, and Gaitskell could be treated with as much mocking but friendly disrespect as anyone else. But in matters of work his authority was effortless. Everyone would undertake tasks because he wanted them done, and enjoyed doing them under his direction. He could build up loyalty by the imposition of burdens.

Outside Parliament, Gaitskell's position remained uncertain until the autumn of 1954. In 1953 he was again defeated for the party executive. It began to look as though he and Aneurin Bevan had settled down to the boring attrition of trench warfare. From his emplacement with the constituency parties Bevan kept up a fairly constant bombardment of Gaitskell's equally well dug-in position with the parliamentary party, and *vice versa*. But it was not an exchange which seemed likely to produce a decisive result. Then the Treasurership of the Labour Party fell vacant. For this post, unimportant in itself, the whole conference, trades unions as well as constituency parties, elects. Both contestants were given an opportunity to get out of their trenches and they both responded with alacrity. The result was a clear victory for Gaitskell. The majority of the big trade union leaders had decided that Gaitskell, despite his utterly dissimilar background from their own, was a man with whom they could work, and that Bevan was not. The decision came at an important stage in his career.

AFTER THIS RESULT there was a gradual ebbing of the ideological conflict within the party. The General Election of 1955 contributed towards this, but even when it had been lost, there was no return to the full bitterness of the preceding years. "Bevanism" was on the wane, and several of its most intelligent adherents were beginning to seek other roles. At the 1955 conference the old lines of dispute were much less in evidence, and Gaitskell surprised his audience, many of

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

whom had been conditioned to think of him as "a desiccated calculating machine," with a strong declaration of his basic political beliefs.

> I would like to tell you, if I may, why I am a Socialist and have been for some 30 years. I became a Socialist quite candidly not so much because I was a passionate advocate of public ownership but because at a very early age I came to hate and loathe social injustice, because I disliked the class structure of our society, because I could not tolerate the indefensible differences of status and income which disfigure our society. I hated the insecurity that affected such a large part of our community while others led lives of security and comfort. I became a Socialist because I hated poverty and squalor.
>
> We in the Labour movement can be proud of what we have done in these 50 years to remedy these ills, but do not let us make the mistake of supposing that all is over. I want to see—and I am a Socialist because I want to see—a society of equal men and women. . . . Nationalisation . . . to me at any rate is a means and not an end in itself. It is a vital means, but it is only one of the means by which we can achieve these objects.

Curiously the speech foreshadowed many of the things he was to say in the Clause 4 dispute four years later. But this did not prevent it making a profound impression on the delegates. For the first time Gaitskell began to acquire a hold on the emotions of the party.

THAT YEAR Attlee was clearly near to relinquishing his twenty-year-old leadership. Gaitskell came only gradually and reluctantly to accept the view that he ought to be a candidate. This was not out of mock modesty. I do not think he doubted, at that stage, that he would one day be party leader. But, at forty-nine, he believed that Herbert Morrison, with whom he had worked closely over the preceding five years, should have a turn first. In June, 1955, he argued most determinedly in favour of this course. Over the summer, however, he was persuaded that the desire of the Labour M.P.s was for a much younger leader than Morrison. If he allowed him to be the only "moderate" candidate, Bevan might conceivably still snatch a victory; and even if this was not so, a short Morrison tenure might lead to a subsequent reaction in favour of the Left.

Once he was convinced of the force of these arguments Gaitskell went forward unhesitatingly. He told Morrison of his decision at the earliest possible moment in October, choosing a luncheon with no one else present—not perhaps the easiest occasion—for breaking the news. He certainly did not look forward to doing so, and when it was over he was greatly relieved. Morrison had taken the information remarkably well. Perhaps at this stage it was natural tolerance. Perhaps he underestimated the force of Gaitskell's challenge. If the latter was the case, he was greatly mistaken. When the contest came, in December, Gaitskell swept the field. He was elected on the first ballot, with nearly twice as many votes as the combined total of Morrison and Bevan. He was the youngest leader of any party for sixty years.

SUEZ was Gaitskell's first crisis in his new position. At first he seemed to hesitate, but as soon as he saw that Lord Avon intended to seek a solution through force, Gaitskell mounted an impassioned denunciation of his actions. He carried most of the Labour Party—and many others—enthusiastically with him on his course. But there were a few Labour M.P.s who stood more or less quietly aside, and it was noticeable—a piquant situation—that Aneurin Bevan was much less wholehearted in his condemnation of the Government's adventure.

Superficially Gaitskell's reaction may have been surprising. He was not particularly sympathetic to Colonel Nasser's régime, and he had been opposed to the method by which it had taken over the Canal. Nor was he, as the chief supporter of the 1951 rearmament programme, in any way sympathetic to pacifism or backward in the legitimate defence of British interests. But his whole outlook at that stage, and for all but a very brief period of his life, was instinctively internationalist. He believed deeply in the Western Alliance and in friendship with the United States. He was naturally a mid-Atlantic man, almost as much at home in New York as in London. The role which he sought for Britain was that of a loyal ally, not of a maverick power chasing off irresponsibly on her own. He cared greatly too about our standing in the United Nations. He had a high respect for the institution and for world public opinion. He had always been willing to stand against Soviet aggression, and he was revolted by the thought that we had reduced ourselves to their level. Equally, he was inclined to favour a bipartisan foreign policy, and was the more resentful of Eden for, as he saw it, shattering the basis of this than were others who, always believing the Tories were wrong, had no store of surplus indignation to use against them.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GAITSKELL'S vehemence on this issue, widely criticised though it was, even by some who were themselves opposed to the Government's action, probably did him no harm in the country. It helped to imprint his personality upon the public, and it began a period in which the Labour Party bounded ahead of the Conservatives in the public opinion polls. Where it did do him some harm was in the House of Commons. For some months afterwards he had difficulty in getting a good hearing from the Government benches. Their occupants paid him back with mocking noise for his part in the destruction of Eden. It was an experience to which he was unused and which was peculiarly upsetting to his style of oratory. It caused him great concern, which I remember him expressing to me in May, 1957. When would this derision end, and if it did not, could he continue to be an effective leader of the opposition?

In fact it ended very soon, and Gaitskell never again had the least difficulty in exercising a full command over the House. What was perhaps a more permanent legacy of Suez was that this naturally moderate statesman was never afterwards on really good terms with the leader of the Conservative Party. With Eden until Suez he got on well enough. But their easy relationship did not survive the clash. And with Macmillan he was always on terms of armed hostility. It seems unlikely that either understood or respected the other. What Macmillan thought of Gaitskell we do not know, but what Gaitskell thought of Macmillan, above all, was that he cheated at politics. His own reckless honesty, accompanied by a compulsive desire to set out every argument in terms which were logically convincing (but sometimes emotionally provocative) made him disdainful of Macmillan's fondness for doing everything behind a smokescreen. Only, perhaps, in the last weeks before his illness did Gaitskell begin to develop a somewhat warmer feeling for the then Prime Minister.

WITH HIS PRINCIPAL RIVALS within the Labour Party, however, Gaitskell's relations improved rapidly in the period after Suez. Wilson had already succeeded him as Shadow Chancellor. Bevan was at first a little more recalcitrant. But at the Brighton conference of 1957 his "naked into the conference chamber" speech led both to a rupture with his old friends of the unilateralist Left and to a reconciliation with Gaitskell. Shortly afterwards Gaitskell asked him to become Shadow Foreign Secretary and the relationship between the two men became amicable and moderately close. It reached its high-water mark during their joint visit to Russia immediately preceding the 1959 General Election. Power seemed near, and Bevan appeared satisfied with his prospective role as Foreign Secretary. Gaitskell was happy to see him fill it in a big way. Not the least of his achievements of leadership was that, for a time, he acquired the knack of working closely with Bevan's rumbustious but magnetic personality, and of harnessing its force without hiding himself beneath its shadow.

This important partnership was first made less relevant by the election defeat, and then destroyed by Bevan's sudden illness and subsequent death. The election campaign, on the whole skilfully fought by Gaitskell (although he was subsequently critical of himself for one major mistake), was hard throughout and at the end cruelly disappointing. Before it began he had been cautious about victory. Until the last six months or so of the Parliament it had looked as though the Government could hardly hope to recover. Then the public opinion polls had begun to swing and Gaitskell had half reconciled himself to this new outlook. Throughout the campaign itself, however, he was consistently buoyant. He generated confidence by effort and swept others along with him. His confidence was not a façade. Twelve days before polling he told me that he was sure of a Labour victory, and remained so, I believe, until the returns began to come in. The disappointment was therefore as sudden as it was heavy.

HIS HOPES died in the Leeds City Hall, with the television cameras frequently upon him. As the Conservative gains mounted, previously damned-up waves of tiredness rolled over him, and as they did so he faced the prospect, not of the period of constructive power for which he was perfectly poised at the time, but of the unavoidable bickering of a three times defeated party. One was inevitably reminded of Adlai Stevenson's, "It hurts too much to laugh, and I'm too old to cry." Yet if he did not laugh, Gaitskell at least managed to smile, slowly and a little sadly, as he so often did, when with a quiet grace he conceded defeat.

Looking back, this defeat was unavoidable. No radical leader could have carried the country in its 1959 mood. Gaitskell did at least as well

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as anyone else would have done. But the inevitability was not so obvious at the time. The whole Labour Party began to cast about for the causes of the setback. From the moment of his return to London, Gaitskell was active in the search. Perhaps mistakenly, he allowed himself no period of recuperation. Without doubt, he and those of us who were close to him, made serious tactical mistakes during the ensuing weeks. We overestimated the rationality of political movements. Equally without doubt, however, the battle which then began, and continued, in different phases, for two years, had to be fought. Broadly the Labour Party was divided into two camps. On the one side stood those who wished to react to defeat by giving the party a more modern appearance and a stronger appeal to the uncommitted voter. They saw its essential role as that of providing an effective alternative government to the Conservatives. It must therefore appeal to the marginal members of the Leftward-thinking half of the country.

On the other side stood those whose primary concern was to defend the ideological citadel. If the citadel became increasingly cut off from the surrounding countryside and unpopular with the inhabitants that could not be helped. Elections were not of primary importance. One prominent socialist thinker wrote cheerfully of another ten years of Conservative government.

Some members of the party stood a little apart from both the camps, and it would have been theoretically possible for Gaitskell to have joined them. But it would have been utterly out of keeping with both his character and his convictions. He was incapable of equating a leader's role with that of a chairman.

THE FIRST PHASE of the battle—that over Clause 4—was far from an immediate success. Gaitskell and those who were with him tried to move an injured party into a more comfortable position, and were rewarded for their efforts with some sharp and angry cries. Even so they got it a little way, before the attempt had to be abandoned. Yet, after this abandonment and the shifting of attention away from the issue, the party began quietly and almost imperceptibly to move itself in the direction indicated. No one looking at the programme, outlook, and assumptions of the Labour Party to-day could doubt that Gaitskell, in a long-term sense, had won his battle. The party is incomparably closer to what he wanted than to what his opponents wanted. It would not go the whole way at his bidding. But it would not have gone at all had he not taken the risk of pointing the way.

After the Clause 4 stalemate came the counter-attack. It was on another front, that of unilateralism and neutralism *versus* the commitment to the Atlantic alliance and the defence policy which this entailed. But basically it was the same issue—whether the Labour Party's role was to be primarily that of a party of power or a party of protest. During the spring and summer of 1960 the unilateralist forces built up with frightening speed. Union after union toppled almost casually into their camp. Gaitskell's position became more exposed than that of any party leader since Baldwin in 1930.

AT THE SCARBOROUGH conference that autumn the almost unthinkable happened. On the central policy issue of the year the leadership was defeated. It had nearly—but not quite—occurred over German rearmament in 1954, and everyone had then assumed that an adverse vote would be an intolerable humiliation for Lord Attlee, rendering his continuance in office almost impossible. Yet he was less committed on that issue than his successor was on unilaterism.

What, then, would Scarborough mean for Gaitskell? Would it force his resignation, or would it leave him with the possibility of carrying on only as the prisoner of a section of his "followers," a figure shown to be so weak that he could not hope to command respect in the House or in the country? In fact, by one of the odd quirks of history, Gaitskell avoided both these alternatives by the widest possible margin. Even the conference itself was far from being a humiliation for him, although it was a great emotional strain. A majority of the delegates were committed to vote against him, but by the time the crucial debate took place many of them were regretting their mandates.

Gaitskell, in his own speech, had both to capitalise this mood and to raise a banner around which men would fight, if necessary risking their political positions in the process. Typically, he chose to do this in the least equivocal way possible. There was no doubt about his banner; the doubt was whether the men with uneasy minds would follow it.

This last doubt was soon removed. His old bastion of the Parliamentary Labour Party remained reasonably secure. When Harold Wilson hesitantly decided to run against him for the

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

leadership his majority was more than two-to-one. And as the contest was fought on the clear understanding that Gaitskell, if successful, would lead against the Scarborough decision, the result struck a great blow, not only against the decision, but against the whole principle of conference authority. Yet he could not rest on this victory. Throughout that winter of 1960–1, Gaitskell "fought, fought, and fought again" on innumerable platforms up and down the country. Nearly every week-end he would make three or four full-length speeches. His physical resilience appeared as high as ever, and he would often fortify himself with a late evening of relaxed conversation before setting out on these grinding expeditions; but, in fact, he was near the margin of his strength.

Sometimes at these meetings the reception would be hostile and even noisy. In these circumstances one of Gaitskell's greatest strengths was his stubborn faith in the power of reasoned argument. What he prided himself upon being was a rational man. The superiority of the multi-lateralist case was to him so obvious that intelligent people of goodwill must surely see it. He would go on patiently explaining what he believed until others believed it too. And this approach, combined with his immense agreeableness of manner in friendly intercourse, succeeded in shifting a good deal of opinion within the party. But was it shifting fast enough? As the Easter union conferences approached this looked extremely uncertain. Gaitskell suddenly began to foresee the prospect of a second defeat, and to recognise that this might be fatal. For a party leader to defy a single conference aberration was one thing. For him to attempt to ignore a series of adverse decisions, amounting to the expression of a settled point of view, was something quite different.

At this stage, more I think than at Scarborough, Gaitskell faced in his own mind the distinct likelihood that in six months' time he might have to go—probably to retire completely from politics. It was a discouraging prospect. It would mean that his period as a party leader, which had begun under such bright auspices just over five years before, would end in complete failure. He would be remembered only as the man who led his party to its third successive electoral defeat and was then rejected by his own followers. Once he had assimilated this possibility in his mind, he faced it with equanimity.

Then, with bewildering rapidity, the outlook changed. When it was least expected an avalanche movement began. The unions followed each other back into the Gaitskell camp as quickly as, the year before, they had moved the other way. Many of the constituency parties did the same. All the hard persuasive work of the winter began to bear simultaneous fruit.

The victory which this made certain was ratified at Blackpool in October, 1961. It left Gaitskell in a far stronger position than he had been before Scarborough. He was dominant in the Labour Party, and he had impressed the public outside as a leader of force, wisdom, and courage. No one foresaw that he had only fifteen months of leadership ahead. By his efforts he seemed to have secured for himself a long tenure of the leadership on conditions of tolerable authority. But what in fact he had done was to bequeath this easement to his successor, and to give Harold Wilson the elbow-room which has helped him to look like a Prime Minister. If Gaitskell had lost, not only himself but any other Labour leader for years to come would have paid part of the price.

The use to which Gaitskell himself put the new room for manœuvre was, ironically, a most unwelcome one to many of his closest supporters on previous issues. He swung the Labour Party into a posture of general hostility towards Britain joining the Common Market. The merit of this issue need not be argued here. I would merely record that while his attitude seemed to me not wholly consistent with his previous general outlook on world affairs, it was in no way the result of a sudden lurch, taken with electoral considerations heavily in mind. I had seen his opposition growing for a year or more before it finally revealed its full force to the public. Like all his political positions it was fixed partly by logic and partly by emotion. And once fixed, he held to it with great tenacity.

I then had the opportunity (although it was a small consolation at the time) to see his political qualities and defects through, as it were, the other end of the telescope. Broadly, they looked much the same as I had previously thought them to be, although I inevitably felt a little more sympathy with those who had differed from him in the past! Courage could be interpreted as inflexibility and an aggressive respect for rationality as a tendency to equate little

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

points and big ones. Yet, by and large, he appeared just as impressive as a temporary opponent as he had so long done as an ally and leader. The warm persuasiveness of his manner and the absolute honesty of his purpose were formidable weapons, on whichever side of them one stood.

Nor did this difference make close personal relations with him impossible. At first I thought it would, but that was under the shock of a sudden break in a long habit of agreement. But then he made it clear that he was still faithful to his old rule of the primacy of private relations. For the last few weeks of his active life we were back on terms of the closest friendship.

WHAT DID HE LEAVE TO English politics? First, the promise of being a great Prime Minister, not because he could necessarily have avoided mistakes, but because he would have infused the whole Government with a sense of loyalty and purpose, and made men of widely differing gifts and character proud to serve under him. Second, a Labour Party with both the will and the capacity for victory, two qualities of which, without him, it might only too easily have deprived itself. And third, a memory which is a standing contradiction to those who wish to believe that only men with cold hearts and twisted tongues can succeed in politics.

## The Violet

The lobed petals receive
Each other's nestling shape.

We share the sun's beneficence;
Frost, men, snowdrops.
Then the violet unfolds. Not an uncasing
Of the flower, each petal compliant
To the purpose of survival, obedient to that; but as it feels
The sun's heat, that puberty
Pushes out from its earlier self-clasping
Two distinct, clenched halves. Stiffens them.
These fluttering portions that made
The bud, separately elect
To be the flower; the violet
Halves itself, pushing apart
In two separate forces;
It divides up itself, it becomes two violet portions.
It is not a conformation of members,
Each petal a tooth, an eyelash.
On the other hand, the violet is torn apart.
Its increase is by dividing;
Its stiffened petals push further apart.
It adheres to its nature; it has no maturity,
Other than this.
It requires courage, and finds that
In this unclasping of its self-worship: two palms tentatively
Open. Going both ways,
They absorb a huge circle
Of violeted air, an intent
Movement of embrace;
Exposed, powerful.
The air is coloured somewhat violet.
It costs itself much.

*Jon Silkin*

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*Dan Jacobson*

# *Only the Best*

RUTH ALTER was hardly a relation at all; she was married to a cousin once removed of my mother's. But, when I was at the university in Johannesburg a few years after the war, the family connexion was close enough to bring us together on such occasions as weddings, barmitzvahs and funerals. Whenever she saw me Ruth lifted a hand in greeting, smiled, and asked after my parents; then turned to her husband and said, "He's the image of . . . ," naming a different cousin or uncle or aunt. Her husband, Louis Alter, nodded absently and said as little as possible in reply. He was a large, swarthy, well-groomed man, with hairy hands and restless eyes; he never seemed to be at ease in any company, though most people were anxious to be agreeable to him. He was very rich indeed; certainly the richest man my family could claim. He owned furniture factories and a chain of shops which sold the furniture his factories made; he owned blocks of flats, a citrus estate in the Eastern Transvaal, and a road haulage firm which would transport anything anywhere (as each truck proclaimed) from the Cape to Cairo. Everybody, except for his wife, treated him with an uncomfortable, unwilling respect; she patronised him.

I suspect that she must have patronised him from the beginning of their acquaintance, when he had been a young, ambitious immigrant, speaking English with a strong accent and owning nothing more than a single furniture store in the slums of Vrededorp. Whereas she, Ruth, was the daughter of an established professional man, a specialist physician, whose family had been in South Africa for generations; a forebear had been one of the first Jews to serve in the Cape Legislative Assembly in the old colonial days, and another had been involved in a famous, scandalous lawsuit against Cecil John Rhodes himself. Perhaps at the time of their marriage people had thought that Ruth was making rather a poor match; perhaps she had thought so herself, and had also believed it to be the best that she could hope for. She could never have been beautiful; when I knew her she was positively ugly—a woman as large as her husband and almost as deep-voiced, almost as square-shouldered. Her lips were full, her brow was protuberant, her hair was piled on top of her head in a mass of greying, sausage-like curls. There were diamonds on her fingers; there was gold in her mouth. The condescension and complacency of her manner were undermined, I would say, only by the odd air of vindication with which she looked at people who came to pay their respects to her husband, or who congratulated her on her clothes, her jewels, her house in Parktown, her lovely children.

RUTH AND LOUIS had a son and daughter; the son, Dennis, was several years older than his sister. He was a tall, amiable, reserved young man who worked conscientiously during the week in one of his father's factories, and played tennis, swam, danced and went picnicking conscientiously over the weekends. He had served as a pilot during the last couple of



PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

years of the war, and had settled placidly into civilian life once the war was over. It was clear that he would inherit his father's affairs in due course, and conduct them efficiently enough—though probably not with the same force which was revealed even in his father's taciturnity, his awkward, thrusting gestures, his restiveness of gaze. It was clear, also, that Dennis would eventually marry one of the rich, pretty girls who were always so pleased to dance with him or play tennis against him, and he did eventually do so. But I was not at that wedding.

Though Ruth was friendly enough to me when we met, I had never been invited to their house, and so I saw her daughter, Marjorie, for the first time only after I had been in Johannesburg for a couple of years and had already met the rest of the family. It was at a wedding-party that I met her, in fact: a big, vulgar affair in one of Johannesburg's expensive hotels, with a band playing at one end of the hired banqueting-room and people eating at tables ranged along the walls. In the centre of the room there was an open space in which the guests would dance when the eating and speechmaking was over. Across this space I saw Louis and Ruth, and sitting next to them a young girl, who at first I just couldn't believe to be their daughter. She was too fair, too slight, too good-looking. Yet, a moment later, as she turned her head, I saw that in her profile there was unmistakably something that was in her father's too: the contrast, I think, between the delicate arched severity of her nose and the roundness and gentleness of her cheek. Once I had seen it in his daughter I saw it always in Louis. For the rest, they seemed to have nothing in common. Her neck was graceful, her bare arms were thin; she sat leaning forward slightly, poised yet uncertain, with her head erect and one hand on the table, the other in her lap. She was wearing a simple, white, high-collared dress, and her hair, with a natural wave in it, was swept back from her brow and tied with a ribbon behind her neck, the ends of it loose in a tuft. There was something almost medallion-like about the girl, in her slenderness and incisiveness; she looked both so frail and so firm.

As soon as I could I went over to them, and after Ruth had greeted me and enquired after my parents, and Louis had nodded and looked away, Ruth said, by way of introduction, "Marjorie's just left school. She's going to the university next year."

"That's nice," I said stupidly, "I'll see you there."

Marjorie smiled, but did not reply. She was not as poignantly, disturbingly handsome as she had appeared to be when I had first glimpsed her, across the width of the room. Her mouth was too broad and its expression was somehow commonplace, as though it would be too easily satisfied by what it might say. And the freckles across the bridge of her nose were sweet and commonplace enough. But she was, all the same, an unusually pretty girl, and I was pleased when she agreed to dance with me. As she stood up to go on the floor I happened to glance at her father. He was staring at his daughter; for once his large brown eyes were quite still. You could hardly say that he was looking at her with love or tenderness; his stare was too fixed, too fierce. It gave me a shock to see him. I wondered what she had done to earn a gaze so ferociously protective. Then I realised that she had done nothing but grow up to look and speak as she did.

At the end of the dance I returned her safely to her parents. We had been together for only some minutes, but it had been long enough for me to see that though Marjorie smiled politely at my jokes, responded politely to my questions, and thanked me politely for the dance, I had quite failed to engage her attention or arouse her curiosity. Still, I told her that I was looking forward to seeing her on the campus, and would be glad to give her whatever help I could and introduce her to people she might want to meet.

Ruth overheard me, and chose to take mild offence. "Marjorie won't be short of company," she said ungraciously.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"No, I'm sure she won't."

"I want her to pick and choose who she mixes with."

"I'm sure she will."

"You can't be too careful nowadays, especially if you're a young girl."

"And a rich one, and a pretty one," I wanted to add; but did not. There was no need for me to say it, anyway, because it was certainly in the minds of all of them—Louis, Ruth, and not least, young Marjorie herself.

IN FACT, I saw very little of Marjorie during her first two years at the university. We went, as they say, with different crowds. Hers was a moneyed, dancing crowd; mine, though much of it was moneyed and some of it danced occasionally, prided itself above all on being intellectual and unconventional. Actually, we were much more noisy, boastful and self-important than we were unconventional; I think the respect we had for Paul Gauss is evidence of that.

I don't know how Paul met Marjorie Alter. At least I haven't got it on my conscience that I introduced them to each other, even though her mother chose to hold me in some way responsible for him. Paul had left school very young, and had taken a science degree with firsts all round; then he had served in the army for a couple of years; now, still in his early twenties, he was back at the university, studying philosophy and history. Again he was doing spectacularly well; how well the rest of us could judge by the nervousness—the servility, almost—with which some of the lecturers spoke to him, the younger ones especially. But his academic success would not have meant so much to us if he had appeared to attach any importance to it. What impressed us was that he jeered at it: he jeered at his teachers, at the university as a whole, at the idea of an academic career, at the idea of any career. "It's all played out," I can remember him saying, disgust and satisfaction oddly mingled in his high-pitched voice. "Careers—success—failure—public causes—private lives—the lot, they're finished, *kaput*. Everyone goes through the motions, but everyone knows it all the same. From now on it's day-to-day, man, it's hand-to-mouth, it's hang-by-a-thread. And one day it'll be bang-bang-bang, and that will be that."

Having made an announcement of this kind, or of any other kind which might provoke dispute, Paul would stare forward, his head lowered truculently at the end of a short, powerful neck, his brow knitted with half-serious ferocity over his dark eyes. He was not tall, but he was very broad across the shoulders and thick in the arms: when he leaned forward in conversation it was as though he were about to use his weight to butt, to charge; when he straightened himself the movement had almost the effect of a kind of magnanimity, as if he were relenting, letting you off.

He was an excellent public speaker, in spite of the disconcertingly high pitch of his voice for a man of his build, and could have been prominent in student politics; but he hardly ever spoke at meetings, and then in a way which offended his friends as much as his enemies. He was something of an amateur social anthropologist, and was one of the few people I knew who could speak Zulu and Xosa quite fluently; he was rather more than an amateur botanist—botany had been his "major" in the science degree he had taken. It seemed as though there was nothing he could not do, or might not become, if only he would settle down, choose a career, and try to make a success of it. We admired him enormously because he refused to do any such thing. We admired him for his laziness, his drunkenness, his irascibility; for the fights he got into in bars in town, the speeds at which he drove the cars he borrowed from his friends, the walls he climbed when he was drunk, the abortion he had had to arrange for a nurse at the Johannesburg General Hospital he had made pregnant. We admired him because he had no home (his father was dead, his mother was in a state hospital for nervous diseases); because he had no money, other than what the government gave him as an ex-service

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

student; because he had no hopes or ambitions for himself and no respect for those of others.

IT WAS HARDLY to be expected that Marjorie Alter would admire him for these reasons. The first I heard about there being anything between them was when I was invited unexpectedly by Ruth Alter to come to her house one evening. I went there with some curiosity, wondering what sort of a social occasion she had organised that could possibly require my presence, all of a sudden; when I got to the house I found that it was no social function at all to which I'd been invited: it was simply a cross-examination.

A servant in a white jacket and trousers met me at the door, and then took me down the hall into the living-room. I was to visit the house several times again, and every time I went I was struck by its appearance of calm and coolness; by the young oak trees which shed their leaves along the driveway and kept the house secluded from the street; by the lawns and flowerbeds which sloped away from the front of the house and led to a pale brown, white-lined tennis-court in the far corner of the grounds; by the contrast between the staring white Cape Dutch gables of the exterior and the dark floors and furniture indoors. One couldn't help being attracted by the size and seclusion of the place, and being a little awed at the thought of the money that had been spent to procure them.

On that first visit Ruth wasted no time; she did not even enquire after my parents. Did I know Paul Gauss? What did I know about him?

"Well, he's very clever."

I could not have said anything more likely to anger her. "Clever enough!" she exclaimed. "Clever enough to try and get hold of what isn't his."

"What do you mean? What's he trying to get hold of?" I truly did not know what she could be talking about.

"Marjorie," she said dramatically. "My daughter Marjorie."

The sofa I was sitting on was an elegant affair of cushions, polished wood, and white leather *riempies*. I sat back against the cushions and tried to stop myself from smiling into Ruth's heavy, frowning face. Her mouth was pursed forward; her fingers, with their many rings, were clasped together on her capacious lap. She was sitting directly opposite me, in a chair that matched the sofa; a few feet from us the french windows were open on to a terrace and the lawns. The afternoon sun pierced through the oak trees in shafts of yellow light, that made the leaves and grass more intensely green where they fell. There was no sound of traffic. What was there to be frightened of? "I didn't even know they knew each other," I said.

Then it all came out, in Ruth's deep offended voice: how Marjorie had been seeing this fellow, without telling her parents anything about it; how Dennis had seen them together at a cinema, and had asked her who her companion was; how Marjorie had told him to mind his own business, and had then said the same thing to her mother; how Ruth's suspicions had been aroused by Marjorie's vehemence. "I knew it wasn't just anybody from the way she spoke. I knew he must mean something to her," Ruth said, and she went on to tell me how she had eventually got his name out of Marjorie. "It was worse than just anybody," Ruth exclaimed. "It was nobody—it was Paul Gauss —Paul Gauss, and that's all. What is he? Where does he come from? What's his family? Who are his friends?" And here Ruth stared at me accusingly. "Of all the names she gave me, the only one I really knew was yours. But I'd heard something about some of the others—enough. What is he studying, I asked. Medicine? Law? Architecture? No. Philosophy, if you please! He studies nothing, he comes from nowhere, he's got no family, his friends don't appeal to me, he's poor, he doesn't come to the door to meet us—"

"And I've told you, that you make everything worse by carrying on about it. Who knows, perhaps Marjorie didn't take him seriously until she saw how seriously you took it? Have you thought of that? And perhaps Marjorie still doesn't take it so

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

seriously, and it's all imagination, in your nead."

Neither Ruth nor I had heard Louis Alter approach; he stood at the door at the far end of the room. What he had just said was about the longest speech I had ever heard him make, and once he had finished he seemed embarrassed by his own loquacity. He did not come further into the room, but stood where he was, balancing his bulk on his highly polished shoes. Then he remembered to nod to me in greeting, looked above my head into the garden, and a moment later turned and went out through the door. We heard him calling roughly for one of the servants. I thought he was ordering some kind of sundowner to be brought to us; but he did not reappear until I was on the point of leaving. Then he shook my hand in silence, and stood in the shadow of the front door to watch me walk away down his drive.

MY VISIT had succeeded merely in confirming Ruth's worst fears about Paul Gauss. It was difficult for me to avoid doing so when almost everything she had gathered about him from Marjorie or had guessed on her own account was true. And I wasn't prepared actually to tell lies in order to build up Paul in her estimation. But I did try to reassure her as best as I could: I spoke of the respect his teachers had for him; I suggested that Louis was probably right in playing down the importance of their friendship to either Paul or Marjorie; and I held back some items of information which I knew would only exaggerate her alarm. One such item was the whereabouts of Paul's mother.

I wondered whether I should tell Paul that Marjorie's mother had called me in and questioned me about him; then I decided that I wouldn't. I really had no wish to become too involved with them all; and I was sure that Paul could look after himself, anyway. But once Ruth had chosen to consult me, I became involved, willy-nilly. I was Paul's friend, I was "family" to the Alters, I became useful as a common acquaintance, as a confidante.

It was only a few days after her mother had spoken to me that Marjorie approached me on the campus and said that she'd heard I'd been to the house and had been asked all I knew about Paul Gauss. Marjorie's manner was embarrassed but determined as she spoke; her voice was high and so was her chin.

"Will you come and have a cup of coffee with me?" she asked, in the silence that followed my admission that I had been to the house. When I hesitated, she turned to me with an abrupt, stooping gesture, as though she were about to put down at my feet the bound files of notes she was carrying like a shield against her bosom. "Please," she said. I did not hesitate any longer.

We had met on the steps of the main block of the university. While we walked to the tearoom, between the prefabricated huts that were being used as emergency lecture-rooms, she told me that she'd really be very glad to talk to someone who was a friend of Paul's and knew her parents and everything. "I mean, now that you know about it, you may as well know all about it, isn't that so? The trouble is—" she laughed fretfully and nervously—"I don't know if there is really anything to know about. That's just why I didn't tell them I was going out with him; I didn't want them to get all excited about something that—" She stopped speaking and walking at the same moment. "Paul isn't the first person I've gone out with, though you'd think he was, from the way that my mother carries on. Of course she approved of the others."

"She certainly doesn't approve of Paul."

We were walking side-by-side again. "Nor do I," Marjorie said.

It was my turn to come to a halt. "Then why do you go out with him? What's the problem?"

"*That's* the problem," Marjorie said, fretfully once more. "At the moment, anyway. I could stand up to Mommy much better if I thought she was all wrong. But I'm not sure that she is."

Eventually, over our Coca-Colas in the tearoom, she said to me, "If only he'd settle down—! It's such a pretence, all this Bohe-

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mianism and not-caring. I know it is; I know him well enough now. It's so childish for him to go on pretending in that way. I really despise him for it."

"What do you want him to do?"

"Just to be like everybody else."

"Wouldn't that be a waste, when he's so much cleverer than everybody else?"

"Isn't it a waste, what he's doing now?"

"I don't know," I said. "I hope not. Would you like him, anyway, if he was like everybody else?"

"I've wondered about that," Marjorie confessed. "I think I would. I'm sure I would. Because there's nothing in the world that could take away from him what he's got. And if he settled down he could have everything else as well."

I considered for a moment; then asked: "Everything Dennis has got?"

I was afraid I had gone too far. But Marjorie answered me without irony, "Yes."

PAUL SPOKE EQUALLY firmly to me about Marjorie. "She's spoiled. They've corrupted her. She's a sleep-walker. She just hasn't woken up to the kind of world we live in. You know what she wants to make of me? A *Leslie*!" His voice rose in disgusted incredulity and derision on the word. Leslie was one name we had for the kind of person none of us wanted to be: Leslie was a Nice Jewish Boy. "Have you been to that house of theirs? Marjorie's smuggled me in a few times when her parents have been away—it's the emptiest, most vacuous place I've been in in my life. All that stinkwood furniture and those Persian rugs and those oils by safe names on the walls: take them away and what would you have? Nothing. A hole. A box of air. Never a stir of mind, a flicker of awareness, never a bit of real feeling. Those people's lives have just got no meaning or shape without their possessions, without the place in the world that they think their possessions give them: a place that you can see and feel and put a big price on. Of course they love Marjorie—because's she's a possession. They're very generous to her—with their possessions. They want order and continuity—for the sake of their possessions. So now they need a safe, successful son-in-law—a new possession. They're not going to get it from me."

"But how do you know what they're like?" I protested. "You've never met them."

"No, but I've met Marjorie. I've seen what they've done to her. And I can see what she's trying to do to me."

"Then why do you carry on with her? Why don't you leave her alone?"

Paul hunched forward obstinately, his arms resting on his thighs, his half-clenched hands dangling. "Because she's struggling to find something else. I know she is, otherwise she'd never have had anything to do with me. She doesn't know what it is; she doesn't even know that she is struggling. But I do."

At that time Paul lived in a room in the backyard of a house in Observatory; a cramped hovel of brick and iron, formerly a servant's room. Paul had whitewashed it inside, and then decorated it with a mural that showed, in its first panel, a host of little stick-like Bushman figures dancing and hunting in the conventional cave-painting style; in the second panel, the same figures were reading newspapers of different sizes, attending political rallies, queueing up outside fish-and-chip shops, and copulating on the back seats of motor cars. When I think of Paul it's in this room that I most often see him, lounging and thrusting about in his shirt-sleeves, which he usually wore rolled up untidily just above his elbows, with a glass of beer in one hand and a cigarette in the other. It was there, one evening, after he had spent some time mocking Marjorie's parents ("What the hell have they got to complain about?" I remember him jeering at Marjorie. "At least I'm not a goy!") that she finally cried out to him, "But Paul, what do *you* want?"

He leaned back and spoke with a sudden quietness and gentleness. "Look, sweetie, child, baby, can't you understand?—when everything's uncertain—when every value is uncertain—then you've got to make uncertainty your value. That's what I'm trying

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to do. Can you see what I mean? I have to do it. Because—do you know what the alternative is? Fear. Funk. Look at the world. Look at the state it's in. The only way you can live nowadays without being afraid is by giving up all your ideas of finding certainty, and security and a position that'll stay firm. As long as you think you've got those things, or that you can get them, you're going to be afraid of losing them, or of never getting them. And quite rightly, too, because they just aren't to be had. Not in this country, or any other. That time's gone by. So what are you going to do? Are you going to be afraid all your life? Is that what you want?"

In a diminished, half-stifled voice, Marjorie answered, "No." Then she looked at him directly, her face strained and open, as if there were no one else in the room. Paul met her look, still leaning back, smiling faintly. He turned to me and said, proudly, yet still gently, "I told you, didn't I?"

EVENTUALLY, Paul was invited to the Alters' house; and that first invitation was followed by others. Ruth had told me that he was permitted to come only because her husband had insisted that it would do more harm to try to keep him out altogether than to let him in occasionally. And he was never invited on his own; always as one of a group of which I was often a member. When he was in the house Paul was invariably on his best behaviour, as if he took a wry pleasure in disappointing the Alters' expectations. He was quiet, modest, and respectful; he never failed to express his appreciation of the flowers on the table, the food on his plate, the drink in his glass. And Marjorie came more often than ever before to Paul's room.

Louis had hoped, of course, that the relationship between Paul and Marjorie would die of its own accord; and that it would die all the more quickly if he showed a degree of indifference to it. But he was disappointed in this hope, and the time came when he finally put aside his affectation of indifference. He was provoked to do so by Marjorie herself, who, I am sure, intended on that particular evening to see just how far she could go, what she could get away with, when her parents were present. She was to get her answer.

There were about half-a-dozen of us at dinner, I remember, as well as Louis and Ruth, who listened with a deep, disapproving silence to Marjorie talking about the illicit multi-racial parties she had been to with Paul, the violent prophecies Paul had made to her about South Africa's future, the plans she and Paul were making to go away on holiday together. With evident dismay, they watched her drinking more wine than anyone else there, and caressing Paul's hand on the table; they heard her swear and laugh when she knocked over a glass of water. It was an acutely uncomfortable meal for everyone: Paul was surprised and embarrassed by the way Marjorie was carrying on, Ruth was outraged and kept exclaiming "Marjorie!" in a tone of loud reproof, Louis did not say a single word.

After dinner, all of us, except for Louis and Ruth, went out on to the lawn, carrying with us rugs and drinks and cigarettes. We had been sitting about for some time, laughing and talking all the more loudly at being released from the constraint we'd felt during the meal, when I went back into the house for a soda-siphon we had forgotten to take out with us. I found Louis sitting alone in the living-room; Ruth had apparently already gone to bed, and he had remained downstairs with a cigarette and a newspaper, in the half-lit room. "Take, take," he said, when I had explained my mission to him, and gestured to the sideboard where the liquor was kept. I was about to leave the room when he called me by name and gestured again, this time to the armchair nearest him. I sat down and for some little while he smoked silently, giving me the same fugitive glance he seemed to give every other object in the room. Then he asked me if I thought it was true what people said about Paul—that he had such a fine mind, a brilliant mind, that he would do so well if only he were to settle down to something.



PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I'm sure it's true. He could do almost anything he wanted to."

"Then why doesn't he find something and do it?"

The question was so simple and straightforward I was touched by it. "I don't know," I said. "That's the kind of person he is."

"Unstable?" Louis suggested.

"Not necessarily."

"What else?"

"Perhaps he's done too well at too many different things. Perhaps it's just difficult for anyone to know what he wants to do, really, nowadays."

"Nowadays. Nowadays, that word is the first, best excuse for everything."

"Well—isn't it?"

"No." Louis was quite firm. "I'm not interested in excuses. Least of all where Marjorie is concerned." He spoke slowly, with long pauses between his words. "You think it worries me that he's got no family, no money, no *yichus*? It worries my wife, yes. But I had no family and no *yichus*, and now I've got enough money to keep a dozen professors in comfort, if that's what he wanted to be. I don't care about that. But I want someone that I know, I *know*, will look after her like she deserves. Will he? Does he? Does it look like it? What is Marjorie learning from him? See for yourself! He doesn't know how to look after himself, so how can he look after her?"

I didn't attempt to answer the questions; I nursed the soda-siphon on my lap, wondering if he had finished. I did not want to get up until he dismissed me; to tell the truth, I didn't dare to. In his sombre, uneasy way, Louis was a formidable man.

Suddenly Louis got to his feet. "No," he said, "no"—not merely in answer to the questions he himself had asked. He went straight to the french windows and out on to the terrace. "Marjorie," I heard him call.

She came running to him. I saw them stand in the light; the lawn stretched away in darkness beyond them. "Marjorie," Louis said, "I want you to tell your friends to go. It's late."

"It's not! Daddy—" Marjorie protested, laughing in surprise.

"Do what I say. Tell them to go."

"And if I don't?" Marjorie defied him jokingly.

"Then you can go."

I saw the expression on Marjorie's face change from irritated amusement to one of blank shock. "Daddy! What's the matter with you? What's come over you?"

"You heard what I said."

"Yes," Marjorie said, the word escaping from her lips as she closed them. They stared at one another, a pace apart. Then Louis lifted a hand and put it on her shoulder. Marjorie did not move away from him. But she said, "You're making a mistake."

"We'll see about that." Louis raised his voice. "Gauss," he called.

Paul came up sideways, slouching into the light. "Yes, Mr. Alter."

"I want you and your friends to go. It's late."

PAUL LOOKED at his watch. I don't think he had heard what had just passed between Marjorie and her father; but he seemed to know at once that he was being confronted directly, challenged in full earnest. "It's only ten o'clock," he said. He had never before spoken so disrespectfully to Louis. Then he added with a deliberateness that seemed to be made all the more insolent by his high-pitched voice, "But it's your house."

"That's right. My house." Louis' hand was still on Marjorie's shoulder.

"Are you coming?" Paul asked Marjorie. "We can go and have something to drink at my place."

Louis answered him. "No. Marjorie is not going with you."

"Aren't you?" Paul asked her.

Marjorie's face was white, her lips trembled. Then she broke, she turned childishly from them both. "I don't know what's the matter with you," she said, as if they were arguing over some triviality.

Paul and Louis remained facing one another, in a silence so prolonged that one felt

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

only a shout or a blow could break it. Louis was the first to move. He glanced at Marjorie; then gestured with his head towards the driveway. "Go on," he said. "You talk too much. Come back when you've done something with yourself."

"Marjorie," Paul said; and again, "Marjorie."

But she would not look at him. She ran into the house. As she passed by me in the living-room her eyes fell upon me, but she did not see me. I heard her running upstairs.

"There," Louis said with satisfaction. "Now you can go."

Paul's round face seemed shrunken; his lips puckered but no words came out from them. He nodded, once, and a second time. Then he turned his back on Louis and began walking away down the drive. The rest of us followed him, in a ragged, embarrassed group. Out on the pavement we stood some paces away from Paul, not knowing if he wanted us to stay with him or to go off alone. We saw him stoop and pick up a rock from the gutter. Then he ran back down the drive, disappearing into the darkness under the trees. We heard him shouting wildly, swearing, calling Marjorie by name. A moment later there was a crash of glass; from the sound of it his rock must have smashed the glass panel in the front door. Involuntarily we scattered, then reassembled at the next corner. Paul emerged out of the darkness of the driveway. He was walking slowly, calmly, with his hands in his pockets. "Let's go and have something to drink," he said.

AFTERWARDS, we all said that the scene between Louis and Paul had been inevitable; something like that had been bound to happen sooner or later. And we waited to see what would happen next. Disappointingly, nothing seemed to happen.

Marjorie went away with her mother to the Cape. And we did not know that Paul very shortly afterwards made application for a research fellowship at the London School of Economics, to study under Professor ——, an historian and philosopher of science who was then practically unknown but is now as famous and as fashionable as a man of his particular kind of intellectual eminence can expect to be. Paul's application was warmly supported by his teachers. Immediately he heard that he had been accepted, he sailed away to England. It all happened so swiftly and quietly that everyone was taken aback by it; some people said that Paul had been in a hurry to get away because he was ashamed of his own ignominious collapse into academic respectability.

They would probably have said it even more loudly if they had known that before his departure Paul had asked Marjorie, who was by then back in Johannesburg, to marry him. It was the first time they had met since that evening at Marjorie's house, months before; and Paul, Marjorie was to tell me much later, began aggressively and angrily. "Don't you know what I can do for you?" he shouted at her. "Can't you see what you can do for me? Hasn't what we've already done together meant anything to you?" Only when Marjorie had begged him to forgive her did Paul reveal to her that he was on the point of leaving for England, and what he was going to do there; only then did he ask her to marry him.

Marjorie had been bitterly ashamed of the way she had failed Paul the last time they had been together; she had imagined that because of her failure he would want to have nothing more to do with her. Now she cried in relief and gratitude. Of course she trusted him. She loved him. She knew, after having been away from him, how much she loved him. She was ready to leave at once. They would travel together. She could get her passage-money somewhere, somehow. She didn't care what her parents would do or say.

Then, to her surprise, Paul advised caution and patience. "We can bring your father round," he said. "I know we can. He told me to come back when I've made something of myself, didn't he? I'll show the old bastard how much I can make of myself. I won't give him a choice, I'll make him come round."

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I don't want to wait."

"We must. It's worth waiting for, in every way. If you break with your parents because of me you'll never forgive me for it. You'll begin to hate me for having forced you to do it."

"Paul, how can you say that to me?"

"Because I know you. And because I want you—everything you are, all you have."

"I want you to have everything I've got."

"I wish I was bringing you more. But I will, one day."

THAT NIGHT, for the first time, they slept together in Paul's room; and Marjorie spent there the nights that followed before his departure. She had told her parents that she was going to stay with a friend who lived in one of the Reef towns. But when she came back to the house she told them the truth about where she had been.

Ruth raged and shouted; she called Paul a bandit, a breaker of windows, a *meshuggeneh* like his mother, with madness in his blood, a filthy, worthless creature. Ruth proposed that she and Marjorie should go on a trip to South America; or that Marjorie should at least visit a doctor, a psychoanalyst, even a rabbi. Both Ruth and Louis had taken it for granted that they had seen the last of Paul, after Marjorie had fled from him and he had attacked the house in a fury of humiliation and frustration. Now, while Ruth raged, Louis avoided his daughter; but he spent several sleepless nights wandering about the house in his dressing-gown and pyjamas. And Dennis put his arm around her shoulders, smiled at her, and told her to snap out of it, sis.

Marjorie waited for Paul's letters, and wrote long letters in reply. His were, at first, abjectly miserable. London was so big, so cold, so dark, so wet, so crowded. He knew nobody, he was a nonentity. The English were impenetrable. The competition was so fierce. There were such huge gaps in his reading. His room was tiny. It smelled of damp. He couldn't afford any other on his stipend. The cost of living was heart-breaking. He had 'flu. He was thinking of coming home. But, no—he wouldn't, he'd see this thing through, he'd make his way. He'd show her, he'd show everyone what he could do.

Marjorie read parts of his letters to her parents, hoping to rouse their pity for his condition and their respect for his determination. She did not succeed. His wretchedness merely confirmed their conviction that he was a man born to misfortune; his promises or boasts about his future were no guarantee of success, or even of a fixed ambition to succeed. Not in Paul Gauss, who had broken their windows and seduced their daughter. They never spoke voluntarily of him. They pretended to have forgotten him.

As time went by Marjorie began altogether to lose hope that she would ever be able to win her parents round, and wrote to that effect to Paul. In reply he expressed regret, concern, disappointment. Her parents *had* to agree to the marriage; he thought so more than ever now. She didn't know, he wrote, she just couldn't imagine, how bleak and hard life in England could be when you were without money or influence or friends. But he knew—only too well. For her own sake, for the sake of them both, he begged her to wait, to be strong.

Marjorie waited and waited. Her cheeks lost their roundness, her face became drawn; the movement of her eyes began to remind me of her father's. Then, one day, when I met her in town, I was struck by a change in her manner: she seemed more cheerful and self-possessed than she'd been for months, ever since Paul had left. "I've made up my mind," she told me. "I'm going to England. I've written to Paul that I'm coming as soon as I can get the money together. My parents don't know and I'm not going to tell them. They can go to hell. I told Paul that after what I've been through with them since he left, I wouldn't take any help from them if they offered it to me. I'm finished with them. They disgust me. I told Paul I'd rather wash floors than accept their money. I'm going to make my own life with him."

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It took Marjorie a little time before she managed to get the money together for the boat-fare: she had to abandon her original plan of going by air because it was too expensive. Secretly, afraid of what her parents might do if they found out her plans, especially as she was still under twenty-one, she sold all the bits of jewellery she had, and half of her clothes; she borrowed some money from the few people she could trust. She had a valid passport, which she had used previously for trips to Lourenço Marques and Rhodesia. To throw her parents off the scent she went to visit a girl-friend in Cape Town, spent a week there, and then simply got on the mail boat; when she was safely at sea she sent a cable to her friend telling her where she was, and another to Paul telling him she was on her way.

Two weeks later she arrived at Southampton and caught the train to London. She expected Paul to be at Waterloo Station, to meet the boat-train; but he wasn't. She went by taxi to the address she had been writing to, and found that Paul no longer lived there. Another taxi took her through the unknown streets to the London School of Economics, where she managed to find out Paul's new address. She made this last journey, too, rang a doorbell, and was met at the door by a woman who declared herself to be Mrs. Gauss.

For a moment Marjorie was tempted to give some name other than her own. Then she said, "Tell Mr. Gauss Marjorie Alter called," and turned away, leaving the strange young woman staring after her.

She had to cable her parents to send her money for the return trip. She caught the first plane back, when the money came, having spent just three days in London.

APPARENTLY Paul was not in fact married when the young woman who was later to become his wife introduced herself to Marjorie as Mrs. Gauss; she and Paul were merely living together, then. Paul had met her only some weeks previously, just after receiving Marjorie's last, determined letter.

By chance I did once see Paul's wife at a party in London: a tall, straight-backed woman with something strangely reminiscent of Marjorie Alter about her. She was non-Jewish. She came, I was told, from a well-known academic family in Cambridge. I daresay that her connexions have been of help to Paul in his career—which, as everyone knows, has so far been a very successful one. He went from L.S.E. to Oxford, from there to the Institute at Princeton, and is now back at Oxford. "One of the most versatile and popular of the younger philosophy dons," was the description given him recently by the gossip-columnist of *The Observer*, in tipping him for a vacant chair in one of the new universities; the columnist went on to mention his wife, his botany, his appearances on television, his lately acquired enthusiasm for jazz, his gift for languages, and the time he spent doing anthropological field-work in a Zulu kraal in South Africa.

Paul himself I haven't seen since he left South Africa; but, given his subsequent career, his motives are not really obscure.

AS FOR MARJORIE—she came back from her three days in London morally subdued and physically diminished. When you saw her you knew at once that her girlhood was over; but the maturity of her face was pallid, meagre, lifeless, quite without the strength it had once seemed to hold more in promise than possession. From the day of her return she avoided me, she avoided everyone who had known her and Paul together, and she took up again with the people she had known before her affair with Paul. It was during this time that Dennis got married; as I've already said, I was not invited to that wedding.

But Marjorie's old friends could no longer satisfy her. About six months after coming back from London she met—and married within days of meeting—an obscure, excitable, divorced, Afrikaans poet, many years older than herself, and went off with him to the Cape. She still lives there, without the poet; and presides over a kind of salon composed of a couple of painters and a man who

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

makes copper jewellery, some actors from the local professional theatre, several people who were once but are no longer Communists, a Jungian, an Italian who runs a tourist agency and is her current lover, various journalists of the more intellectual kind, an occasional visiting celebrity, and all their assorted womenfolk.

Before she finally managed to put the Afrikaans poet out of her house, Marjorie had had a daughter by him, who lives for the most part with her grandparents in Johannesburg. Ruth, who has aged less than one might have expected, is the most devoted and indulgent of grandparents. Louis has had two heart-attacks recently; they have stilled his physical restlessness but somehow this has not made him any calmer than before. He sees to it that regular sums of money are remitted to his daughter in Cape Town. Neither he nor his wife ever visits her there.

*Copyright © 1964 Dan Jacobson*

## Dream Flowers

In last night's dream who put into my hand
Two sprigs of verbena, culled from what sweet tree?
Your mother, it was told me, though I could not see her:
But to what daughter and by what mother,
By what Demeter to what Persephone given?
Was the hand mine that took those flowers
Given from one world to another?

There is a speech by none in this life spoken,
Yet we the speakers, we the listeners seem.
In that discourse all signifies;
But what mind means that meaning which then is known?

Flowers of the earth grow out of the mystery;
From the deep loam of what has been
The past rises up in their life-stream
On whose surface images form and reform,
But our dreams flow from a deeper spring:
Not from the past nor from the future come
But from the origin
These semblances of knowledge veiled in being.

***Kathleen Raine***

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*Kingsley Amis*

# No More Parades

## *On Leaving Cambridge*

My first visit to Cambridge was, perhaps by way of omen, to fail a scholarship. I find it ominous too that, although I can still visualise fairly sharply the environs of the digs I stayed in for that couple of days in 1940, I was never able to locate them in the Cambridge I saw in 1961–63. Similarly, I suppose I must have sat the examination somewhere in St. Catharine's, but renewed inspection of that college brought no twinge, not even of remembered apprehension. I might have known that Cambridge would never come to hold what Oxford still holds for me, the affectionate, dimly melancholic appeal of a place one has done some growing-up in. That appeal is untransferable.

To have set off with a personal note or two is appropriate. Although I consider myself better off outside Cambridge than in it, I am not going to offer a supposedly objective account of its defects as an institution or of those in our higher education system at large. Both Cambridge and system, indeed, seem to me very much worth defending, especially against the kind of encroachment recommended in the Robbins Report. But one of the more grateful rewards of ceasing to teach is that of being able to lay down one's arms in this all but lost battle—hardly a battle, really, more like a campaign with the two armies for the most part out of range of each other, and thus doubly exhausting. In any event, my withdrawal from the academic scene means that, when (or if) in due course people start noticing that we have more university graduates than we know what to do with and that their standard is low, I shall be able to enjoy saying "I told you so" at a comfortable distance from the *débâcle*.

At Oxford—to continue with reminiscence—my relations with the dons were never close. My tutorial experiences as an undergraduate, and later as a graduate student, plus some attempts to drink port and crack walnuts as a Senior Common Room guest, made me think there were two sorts of dons. There were old dons, port-and-walnuts men who were courteous and had once written a book, but who said little about literature except that Chaucer was a perpetual fountain of good sense and Milton had organ-music. And there were young dons, brusquer figures who were, or had been, often absent in places like the Ministry of Information and who knew a tremendous lot which they did not ordinarily divulge.

My tutor in 1941, the late Gavin Bone, partook of both types. On my first visit my eye was caught by a set of handsome blue-bound tomes on his bookshelves. Their general title, *The Works of Chaucer* or words to that effect, led me to believe that here was a set of the works of Chaucer. I drew attention to it. "That's a nice set of Chaucer you've got there," I said.

"That? Oh, that's not an edition," Bone said. "It's a list of the variant readings in the different manuscripts. Have a look if you like." He brought one of the volumes over. "Photographed typescript," he explained. "No printer could set up this sort of stuff. The Americans did it."

I suppose I made some reply. The incident impressed me. That was Oxford scholarship: there was no knowledge but they knew it, or anyway could get at it by stretching out a hand. At the same time they were very upper-class (like so many of their pupils). A few provincials might have got in because of the vulgar recency of their subjects, or as egalitarian window-dressing, but the main outline fitted in with



PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

my early picture—which I have since had to modify only in detail—of British culture as the property of some sort of exclusive club. I never liked this, but when in 1961 a job at Cambridge came up I told myself that things like the passage of time and a couple of Labour governments would have put paid to the class business and also seen off the old dons. Cambridge, moreover, was not Oxford: to my contemporaries it had always seemed mysteriously more "go-ahead" than the other place. And the presence there of Dr. Leavis guaranteed that, if nothing else, nobody could get away with talking about fountains of good sense and organ-music.

MY EXPECTATIONS of Cambridge, then, were naïve. They had somehow survived the general drubbing which a dozen years of teaching in the provinces had given my ideals. They were also predominantly intellectual, in the sense that I felt I was in for an experience primarily concerned with the things of the mind, the study of English literature in particular. That hero-figure of my youth, the don who whether old or young was devoted to serious, disinterested inquiry, was about to be made flesh. I found quite early that not only was he not going to emerge from the mists of illusion, but that the experience I was in for was primarily not academic but social. Like many an undergraduate, and to no better effect than many, I found much of my energy leaking away in a struggle to replace the one by the other.

With the possible exception of the subscription dance (in aid of the local Youth Club or whatever), no more powerful instrument of social unhappiness exists than the dinner party. I differentiate this from the often rewarding habit of having a few drinks and something to eat in the company of friends and their friends, and I contrast it very unfavourably with the cocktail party—so often vilified by its keenest attendants—and the pub session. Unlike either of these, the dinner party prohibits late or casually attired arrival, early or manifestly drunken departure, total non-appearance without grave illness or domestic tragedy as an excuse. Worse, the characteristic form demands that the sufferer spend a good two hours immovably trying to talk and listen to people he has never seen before.

The Feast, or similar college function, goes several better than this in its enforcement of active boredom. It starts by habitually excluding women—the sole excuse (and a poor one) for dressing up in those ridiculous and uncomfortable clothes. It prolongs matters by Latin toasts and loving-cup ceremonies and by multiplying the number of courses—by a horrible irony, these last are almost always delicious and accompanied by marvellous wines, so that the experience of eating and drinking them in strange company is rather like listening to Mozart, say, while suffering from toothache. (Mozart at just less than comfortable volume, too: there is never enough wine.) The hall is unheated. Hours of nicotine-starvation elapse. And, just in case your man might have struck a congenial neighbour, at dessert next door he is placed with a completely fresh set of people, drinking first-class after-dinner drinks which he must remember to keep passing leftwards or cannot get at because someone else has forgotten this duty.

THE ABOVE MAY SOUND peevish, or obvious. My dislike of being compelled to converse with strangers is perhaps excessive. Although guest-nights in other colleges might involve some port-passing protocol, or even a lecturette from the Master on the provenance of the Combination Room panelling, dining ordinarily in one's own college, among colleagues, not strangers, is pleasant enough. No penalty is awarded for non-attendance at Feasts, and the city's restaurants, pubs and private houses are always available. Nevertheless the Feast is Cambridge at its most Cantabrigian, and to have ceremonially burnt my dinner-jacket in King's Parade was the valedictory gesture which attracted me most, ahead of tearing up my notes on Jane Austen or dropping *Biographia Literaria* into the Cam. I am objecting not to an exhibition of snobbery but to a mode of social behaviour which narrows and formalises and stiffens ordinary intercourse, which colours to some extent all other collegiate modes and which the newcomer will either conform to or retreat from into a sulky leather-jacketism.

I should point out here, and in general, that truth as well as piety leads me to salute Peterhouse as an oasis of good nature and common sense. Possibly its smallness helped. I never saw there any of the "college politics" which, together with port-quaffing, form the total of donnish activities in the popular mind. I suspect anyway that such "politics" are not a besetting sin in Cambridge at large, and that

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

warring factions are actually to be found in a couple of other fields. Dispute abounds between the colleges on the one hand and the University on the other: the main issue here is the right, or non-right, of the colleges to appoint Fellows freely, according to their needs and preferences, rather than under dictation from the University. Elsewhere the scene of conflict is within (no doubt occasionally between) individual Faculties. I saw little of this, having no lecturing post in the English Faculty, though at the one general meeting I was invited to I witnessed a first-rate clash of opposing juntas, perhaps staged expressly for my benefit.

MY CONTACT with my fellow-academics, then, was not often directly professional. Very good. I sat back for a dose of original and well-grounded talk about English literature. I did not get it. (I am sure I did not give it, either.) To my dismay, what I got was talk about intra-Faculty discord and personal quarrels, syllabus changes, the proportion of Firsts to other Classes, the attendance at old Joe Soap's lectures, etc.—necessary topics, no doubt, but discussed in my presence far more exclusively than I remember from my provincial days, when a remark about Donne would come up now and then. In general—I encountered three shining exceptions to all this, two of whom have now gone elsewhere—in general, were they so pleased to be at Cambridge that they thought less about anything else? Certainly, I thought Cambridge meant too much to Cambridge. A history don in another college told me of how, after a year at Yale, he came back quite eager to discuss with his colleagues what he had learnt there. They listened for a time and then asked him if he thought Snooks had the weight for this new Readership. "You go south of Royston," my informant ended gloomily, "and you're in the outer darkness."

On the other hand, one expectation of mine was realised, at any rate in part. At the donnish level, the class thing did seem a thing of the past. The commonly held view that the selection of candidates for college entrance has a class bias is misinformed. On the contrary, many colleges lean over backwards to admit grammar-school boys, so much so that once, at a scholarship meeting, I found myself arguing that a boy's having been to a well-known public school should not be held against him. What keeps the class thing going at the *undergraduate* level, what sees to it that only 9% of entrants come from working-class homes, is the clear general superiority of public-school education. The way to bring it about that the highest I.Q.s get to Cambridge, or Oxford (if this is thought desirable), is not to lecture selection boards on their sensitivity to accents, but to reform the school system, which is a good idea anyway.

HOWEVER UNDERSTANDABLE it might be that undergraduate Cambridge is still the resort of the upper classes, the results of this depressed me. To hear all those young chaps—a small minority, no doubt, but how vocal—braying and baying to one another across the streets or the interiors of pubs distracted me from thoughts of Donne. At times I became a one-man resistance movement, broadcasting baleful glares, trying to force them to thank me when I stood aside for them in shop doorways, stopping them from hijacking taxis. No good. They were too firmly seated. Early one lunch-time I was enjoying a quiet beer and minding my own business in Miller's Wine Parlour when a voice suddenly bawled:

"Well of course I know that style of acting's been pretty much left behind these days but I must say that a fellow like Gielgud does seem to *me* to have a certain *presence* and *authority* and at least one does get the feeling that the man's read a *book* occasionally and can come on to the stage without *throwing himself about* like a...."

There was more. What arrested me was not the content of this discourse but its volume. I looked about me in amazement. Nobody else was taking the least notice; even Stanley behind the bar went on calmly polishing glasses. If I had been the father of the orator—he sat surrounded by parents and relatives—I should have laid my finger to my lips or, if that failed, my hand across his mouth. But then, I reflected, I am a child of the lower middle classes, whose members keep their voices down in public lest others may hear and condemn. And I had not had time to get used to Cambridge.

All these dissatisfactions may be thought to have their root in a sense of injured merit. Perhaps I felt I got less than what I felt was my due as a man of letters. Perhaps. But what I expected was far less a D.Litt. *honoris causa* than a going-over or two, an occasional outbreak of threats and abuse. Even these were denied me. (A writer in *Delta* did complain that he had not

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

found a novel of mine so much as funny, but Cambridge is the least damaging place in England in which not to be found funny.) However, it was conveyed to me repeatedly and authentically that an eminent figure in the English Faculty, on being told that Peterhouse had such-and-such a view of such-and-such a problem, had retorted: "Peterhouse can't expect to be taken seriously about anything now that it's given a Fellowship to a *pornographer*."

This was taken to refer to me, rather than to any of the recently appointed Research Fellows in branches of the sciences. The imputation surprised me at first. I have always thought my work very chaste, somewhat concerned with sex, admittedly, but so sparing of physical descriptions as almost to incur the opposite—and to me far graver—charge of discreditable reticence. But it is not for me to determine, or to know, what other people may find sexually stimulating. Only the other day I was reading about a man who got a kick out of winding pyjama cords round himself and kissing pieces of paper. Should somebody feel impelled to use my books for this sort of purpose, I can have no valid objection.

I WAS EVEN MORE surprised to hear from many sources that I was widely regarded in Cambridge as a homosexual. It is not for me to quote evidence against this idea, but if there is any of that in me it must operate at a level inaccessible to introspection. Anyway, after being disconcerted for a time I thought I had found the reason for such a view of me. I was sometimes to be seen round the pubs drinking with my pupils, who were perforce young men. In the provinces this would hardly be noticed—in some Swansea pubs, for instance, the absence of such circles would be unusual—but at Cambridge it seems to be rare, at any rate in the humanities. I am not going to pretend that, on the occasions mentioned, literature was seriously discussed very often. But it was sometimes, and I think this can be very valuable. It is not that pubs have any mystical virtue; it is just that in their ambience teacher and pupil can talk on something much nearer equal terms than is possible during the supervision period or tutorial hour, when, inevitably and rightly, a degree of formality prevails. There is an important general point here.

At some stage in talking to every other undergraduate I would ask him what he most felt the lack of in Cambridge life. All of them without exception, however they differed in other ways, said they wished they had more contact with senior members of their college and of the University. The first time I heard this was after the meeting of a literary club I had been giving a talk to. I pointed out that many a well-disposed don was probably nervous of anything more intimate than the official sherry party. There were too few even of these, they said. I argued that an uncommonly fine tact was needed on the don's side if he were not to appear either merely dutiful or excessively chummy. "Yes," a dozen young men seemed to say in unison, "but he could try."

Any complaint so universally and warmly voiced, at any rate in Cambridge (and Oxford too?—but the provinces less?), needs urgent attention. The undergraduate deserves to feel one of the same group as his pastors and masters: the etymology of the word "university," in fact, proclaims the unity of teachers and taught. The confusion and apathy of many students, the lack of sense of direction—not to speak of more painful troubles—so often commented upon, all derive in part, I suggest, from failure to bridge the gap. One notices that undergraduate isolation seems more acute at Cambridge and Oxford, where the dons are less accessible, than in the provinces, where, I have said, relations tend to be closer.

The (Cambridge) tutorial system and the (Oxford) moral tutor system are inadequate solutions. With the best will in the world—and the will is very often of the best—a don who is busy with administration as well as with his own work cannot be expected to become more than acquainted with the dozens of young men under his care. He will be resorted to, if ever, only when trouble has become acute. Far more radical measures are needed. A change of heart among dons in general would help, a decision that the company of one's pupils, however distasteful, must be cultivated. And why should it be distasteful? The don to whom the society of the young is not positively congenial has little reason to be where he is. I saw few of his kind at Swansea.

Changes of heart, however, are unreliable. Nothing less will do than a planned return to the days when dons (being forbidden to marry) made the college their home and when, consequently, the college community had a chance of being a real one. Nowadays most dons are

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

family men; major interests take them out of college, which becomes a place where they teach and eat some of their meals. I am not advocating anything so drastic as a reimposition of celibacy. The married dons and their families must be moved bodily into college or—to use a term more appropriate to what I envisage—on to campus. (Churchill College has made a start on this.) Such is the only arrangement I can think of whereby don and undergraduate could achieve the kind of casual neighbourliness from which both would benefit. The accommodation problems would be immense, let alone the mental readjustment. But if the colleges want to defend their autonomy, and I think they are right to do so, they must show that there is a college life which is worth defending.

NOTHING I have said so far has much bearing on my decision to leave Cambridge. However formidable its social barriers, my wife and I managed to keep on circumventing them. As time went on I found myself increasingly drawn to certain scientists, people who were not going to tell or ask me anything about the English Moralists paper in Part II of the English Tripos and who, with their love of music and interest in contemporary writing, seemed to unite the two cultures, or rather to demonstrate the unity and breadth of the one, in a way hardly possible to the humanities man. They and their wives lit up a rather shadowed picture, a town whose most characteristic images —King's chapel, say, at dusk in a thin mist— seemed cold and lonely, a setting more appropriate to an unhappy love-affair than the bustling exchange of ideas that is supposed to go on: inhospitable despite the ceaseless ceremonial parade of hospitality. Arrival at that curious railway station, with its endless single platform like something out of Kafka or Chirico, ought to tip off the sensitive. But I should not have wanted to write this part if Peterhouse and its gardens and its occupants (not least its kitchen staff) could have been put on rollers and shifted to somewhere in the Cotswolds or upstate New York.

What really drove me out was paradoxically what made me most reluctant to leave: teaching. Nobody who has not experienced it can fully imagine the peculiar drain which this activity makes on one's energy, nor its unique rewards. Ten or twelve hours a week, old boy? the businessman or journalist (or educationist) asks incredulously: you don't call that a job of work, do you? I do. Leaving out preparation—and I had plenty of that, it never having occurred to me before that the works of Racine or Strindberg were necessary parts of an English course —I found myself fit for nothing much more exacting than playing the gramophone after three supervisions a day. I count this kind of teaching as about one-third as tiring as appearing on television. Try visualising yourself getting home and carrying on with your novel after an hour in front of the cameras. Perhaps you could do it; I couldn't. And I am one of those who begin to feel uneasy after more than two or three days away from the typewriter. It seemed to me I had little choice.

THE MAIN POINT of teaching, in my view, is not simply that it affords an irreplaceable contact with youthful intelligences, though there is that. What distinguishes it is, in a sense, its social aspect. Serious, detailed, and exhaustive discussion of literature is impracticable in any other context. The swapping of arguments over a glass of beer can be, I have suggested, a most valuable supplement to formal teaching, but it is no substitute for it. And to reach for the text during a chat among friends ("it just so happens that I have my *Paradise Lost* with me. Now if you'll glance at the passages I've marked near the beginning of the Sixth Book....") is something we are right not to do or to tolerate in others, unless in effect we are agreeing to teach or be taught. But reaching for the text, and at an early stage, is what we must do if discussion is not to peter out or shift its ground. The solitary student is thus under a handicap, and here is one half of the reason why teaching and research must go together. It is not just that the teacher can try out his ideas on the pupil, as on the dog. Teaching his ideas teaches him what these ideas are.

I miss my pupils not only as instruments of my own education, but as people. They were an amiable and tolerant lot. One of them was always hunting and shooting and fishing when he should have been telling me about *Middlemarch*; another brought me forty pages on *King Lear*; a third did not know what satire was. (That was back in '61.) But I survived this. I forgive them all for forcing me to read *Volpone* and *The Anatomy of Melancholy* and *Bleak House* (especially THAT) and *Heart of Darkness*. Can I say more?

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# *Some Letters of*
# *Bernard Berenson*

BERNARD BERENSON was born in Lithuania in 1865, hence a subject of the Emperor Alexander II. His family migrated to America in 1875 and settled in Boston. They were in humble circumstances, but the brilliance of the boy inevitably attracted patronage and after attending the famous Boston Latin School, he went to Harvard, spending there the years 1884–1887. He was one of the early editors of the *Harvard Monthly*, succeeding Santayana who was a friend and a contemporary. Indeed his first interests were literary.

Berenson went abroad for the first time—if we discount his Russian early childhood—in 1887 and one of the earliest letters preserved of the many which he was to write from Western Europe, where indeed he spent the rest of his life, is addressed to his chief patroness, Mrs. Jack Gardner who, with others, helped Berenson financially and enabled him to go abroad. The later letters to Mrs. Gardner indicate what proved to be his life profession—namely the "expertising" and attributing of Italian Renaissance pictures and drawings. In this matter "B.B." as he was known to his friends, was a pupil of Giovanni Morelli who had devised a revolutionary method of attribution based on the careful comparison of the rendering of minor repeated physical characteristics in figures and, by extension, also of aspects of landscape, etc. This system took the place of attributions based on general style-impressions and the results were embodied in four small volumes on Italian painting which Berenson published between 1894 and 1907.

In 1890 Berenson met, at her family's house in England, Mary Costelloe, the daughter of Philadelphia Quakers who had settled in Sussex. She was the wife of Frank Costelloe, a barrister by whom she had two daughters. In 1891 Mary Costelloe went to Italy where she from then on spent most of her time. Much later, in 1900, a year after the death of Costelloe, she and Berenson were married. As Mary Berenson's previous marriage had been a Catholic one, there could have been no question of a divorce during the period 1891–99.

In 1900 B.B. rented a villa, I Tatti, at Settignano which for the rest of his life was inseparably connected with him and where he subsequently built up a collection of Italian Renaissance paintings—although he did not think of them as a collection but merely as decorations for his house—and a valuable library on which perhaps he set even more store. Here the Berensons lived in the fashion of so many expatriates of their period and here Mary Berenson died in 1945, Berenson surviving her by fourteen years. Here they stayed even during the war of 1939–45 except for a brief period when during the German occupation Berenson went into hiding in the house of a neighbour which was diplomatically immune. The story of this disturbed time is revealed in some detail in his letters. The Berensons had no children but in later years Mary Berenson became wrapped up in her grandchildren who were then growing up. Mary's brother, Logan Pearsall Smith, the distinguished writer and critic, as well as her sister Alys, the first wife of Bertrand Russell, had settled in England and become Anglicised; her own daughters were of course English and had married Englishmen, and therefore her grandchildren were likewise English; B.B.'s relations continued to live in America and to remain Americans. One of his sisters, Rachel, married Ralph Barton Perry, the philosopher, and there were several cousins, one of whom, Lawrence Berenson, his attorney, figures in the correspondence. Berenson himself always remained an American citizen.

"B.B." *continues to fascinate. Readers will recall* [ENCOUNTER, *January, 1960*] *Sylvia Sprigge's moving account of his death and funeral in Florence (at the age of 94) as well as Meyer Schapiro's article* [ENCOUNTER, *January, 1961*] *with the ensuing discussion by Hugh Trevor-Roper, Benedict Nicolson, and David Sylvester, among others. These letters are selected from a forthcoming volume, edited by A. K. McComb, to be published later this year by Hutchinson (London) and Houghton Mifflin (Boston).*



PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BERENSON FIRST MADE a competence from buying pictures on commission for Mrs. Gardner's collection. Indeed he was largely "responsible" for the collection. Later he also collaborated with other great American collectors, such as Walters, Johnson, and Widener. He had a long association with the dealer Duveen. His word as to authenticity and authorship carried overwhelming authority and was in the highest degree financially remunerative. B.B. enjoyed a commission of 10 per cent on the net profit of every painting which Duveen sold and which Berenson attributed. After 1927 this arrangement was replaced by an annual retainer. Later he had a connection with Wildenstein and before his death had accumulated a fortune which brought him an income (in 1939) of ca. £8,000 ($40,000) a year.

In later life he seemed to regret having become an expert and developed a wish to have led what might be called a Goethean life. After the purchase of I Tatti at the turn of the century and perhaps particularly between the wars he entertained a great deal. Many frequenters of the house were also his correspondents as the collection in the book will show. He was a social and gregarious man and had a vast acquaintance which extended far beyond his professional interests. Berenson's tenor of life has been compared to that of a Prince in a small court. One sees what is meant but the objections to such a view are in detail formidable. A rather closer parallel to the life of I Tatti, which perhaps will make its nature clear, must have been that of Ferney. Both were well appointed houses lying just outside what Spengler calls "culture cities." There was the same cosmopolitanism, the same coming and going of celebrated persons from all parts of the civilised world, the same atmosphere of *esprit* and "enlightenment," and the same centering of attention on the Master of the House. Now, in the Villa as a Harvard institution, one feels the lack of his presence. So might some 18th-century visitor feel who returning as a ghost to Ferney failed to find Voltaire.

## II

BERENSON was an indefatigable correspondent. Following the courteous custom of his generation, all his numerous letters are in longhand, though written after the invention of the typewriter. A complete collection of the letters would fill a number of volumes and a great part might of course be interesting only to specialists, colleagues, art critics, museum curators, dealers, and so on. Such a collection would certainly be of interest considered from the point of view of the history of taste; the present selection has however another purpose. It is to present to the general educated public an *aperçu*, through his letters, of a great connoisseur, expatriate, and cosmopolitan of the turn of the century. For this is the time to which Berenson essentially belonged, though he lived until 1959. Berenson was a rich man and led a life of some style. In this aspect, too, he was a representative of the last stage of classic capitalism. His interest and attitudes all reflect this moment in typical fashion. We are told, *e.g.*, that his attitude to the welfare state embarrassed some of his younger, more "socially conscious" English visitors but equally these attitudes were pleasing to those who were older or took a more traditionalist, conservative, or classical view of the world. In addition Berenson was a very well-read man not only in fields tangential to his own but in those widely separated from his professional interests. One gets the impression that he somewhat consciously "cultivated" his mind, as one might a garden, and that this process had its acquisitive side, so that he was at once pleased with the look of the garden and proud to be its owner. As Santayana has said when comparing Berenson with Charles Loeser, his neighbour *oltr' Arno* and also a rich collector: Loeser seemed to enjoy the Renaissance while Berenson had the air of displaying it. Such psychological questions may be left to the reader, who will gather a good deal directly and indirectly from the letters.

Berenson was very much interested in politics and in questions of the day and his letters are full of topical allusions. The most interesting reflections to a later generation are doubtless those of a general character, as for instance his view of other nations' attitudes to England, his comparison of Nazis and Communists and so on rather than in day-to-day comments on political details. The latter would of course be interesting in the case of a statesman's letters, but Berenson's comments on this subject were often merely those of a gifted journalist. His attitude to America (where he spent only twelve years of his life), to Italy ("a great culture but not a great nation" I heard him say one day in the presence of Carlo Placci who was understandably not pleased), or again to distinguished persons of his time, such as Santayana or Edith Wharton, has a special interest. It is not too much to say that the letters (which to be sure are very consistent with the living person one knew) add a good deal to his formal writings and reveal a marked personality. We know that he was a celebrated one. His friends will derive some pleasure from seeing his figure once more as it is here outlined. Those who did not know him personally will perhaps feel after dipping into his correspondence as if they had.

Mary Berenson and her brother Logan Pearsall

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Smith (whose English was rather exquisite) did not believe that B.B. had any great literary gift. I venture to agree with them, and think that the interest of the letters lies elsewhere. I shall add —for the amusement of the reader, in case he chooses to make a comparison of his impressions —that I find the earlier letters, let us say before 1910, fresher, more spontaneous, and even more genuine than the later. The world impinged a great deal on Berenson—he knew it and gave expression to his regret more than once. Berenson, who enjoyed being verbally malicious, was fundamentally nevertheless extremely loyal and tenacious in his friendship for those who won his approval. The editor of these letters himself can testify to many kindnesses and much generosity in the estimate placed by Berenson on some of his occasional writings concerning Italian painting. But Berenson was a complicated person. Though very constant in his attachments to the arts, he was divided I think with respect to his life and his role. I use the word role advisedly for, like many persons of his generation, he much of the time, one might say, thought of the world as a stage. To those on the outside, of course, his life seemed to have great consistency, and from this point of view it was a work of art. Berenson who was charmingly easy of access was not easy to know more *à fond* than a social contact implies. We may leave these puzzling matters about an interesting man to the reader.

A. K. McComb

To Mary Costelloe

*Florence, 1892*

I got thy Wednesday letter this morning. I hastened to buy a fiver[1] wh. I sent off at once plus the request for thee to get a Braun of Bronzino's little boy of the N.G. to send at once to my sister. I hope thee will attend to this. The same post brought me a long letter from my sister. There is nothing about thee even by implication, but it made me deadly sick and very miserable for a few hours. She seems to have got about as much out of the long letters I have written as a dog does out of something you shout to him. It does not matter whether you shout Snap, Tap, Yap, Jap, or Gap. All the dog hears is Ap. Most people are just like that when you try to tell them something. They pounce on some strongly accented word, and hear nothing else. It is because this is so true of most people that such as Ruskin, Symonds, and Vernon Lee have their use. They shout a lot of nonsense at the public, and all the public gets out of it is the monosyllable *art*. But once the public get the ring of this monosyllable they will follow anybody who shouts it at them, you and me, if we shout loud enough, as much as Ruskin and Co. . . .

At lunch we talked about the English and their attitude towards the new. They have the dread of it that savages have of a tabooed thing, and such a dread of course is never free from fascination. So they keep away from the new thing, until some person they well know and can trust embarks in it. Then when they see that lightning hasn't struck him, they all rush after him —not from a love of new experience, but from the fascination accompanying the dread of this new experience. . . .

I read the whole of my article on Venetian art to Burke this afternon. He was duly appreciative. In fact he could not be more so. I had not read it myself a long time, and it struck me again as something remarkable. Reading Ranke last night I came to a passage about the attitude of the individual towards Christianity which I thought of quoting whole in my article. But behold I find that I have put it much better myself. What a pity it seems that the thing should remain unpublished. If only I can get a translation of Ibsen's last play I would rather we wrote about that on your return than about Diderot. I have a lot to say about Ibsen, that even you have not heard, and all with regard to his women. I now see the wire that pulls all of them that he himself is interested in. It is so simple that you will say, "Oh, is that all!" when I tell you. But I won't tell you anything until you return. It will be three weeks I fear before you come back, such a long time. . . .

Campanella's *Città del Sole* was fascinating, and far too short. Its chief point is the state without a family, which family according to him is the source of most of the evils in the world. This "City" is governed entirely by what he considered pure reason. Of course he only has an historical value. His intense devotion to astrology rather repels one nowadays. He is interesting as showing how much a clever man could manage to say in the darkest days of the Inquisition without getting himself burned. More interesting still as having already rid himself of all considerations not purely reasonable.

[1] Berenson presumably means a £5 note, rather more than would have been necessary to buy "a Braun," *i.e.*, a photograph by Braun et Cie.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Even his astrology is submitted to reason. I find it hard to understand exactly what his intentions were about women. They were to have exactly the same education as men, and were to bear arms. As to voting, that is done by all *majori di venti anni*. This might include women, altho' I am not sure he meant it to. No such thing as marriage, of course. Sexual intercourse was strictly to be regulated by the state, but entirely from the point of view of breeding. Children were to be brought up to consider all of a certain age as possible parents—an old idea of my own. He is specially interesting about education which is the very basis of his estate. Children are taught in such a way that they do not know they are learning, and yet are learned at ten. His method is object lessons, and the modern Kindergarten method in general. Of course there are no castes or artificial grades in his city, and property is unheard of. All labour is noble. On this point Bellamy has cribbed him from beginning to end even the Kitchens, waiting, and the theory that four hours of labour are sufficient. He foresees steamboats, altho' not steam, and many other modern inventions. In some respects the America of to-day is not so very unlike his "ideal." He knows no difference between science and religion. Everything is a strict science, and the most proficient in all the possible sciences is the spiritual and temporal things of the nation. His system of education is of course founded on the methods then newly introduced by the Jesuits. Everywhere his book shows that it was written by a man on whom Catholicism still had a great hold. The most startling thing about the *Città del Sole* is that it seems to contain no notion whatever of freedom. Such a thing is not heard of in his state. The whole book is his dream of a perfect world, and it is startling that it does not even occur to him to question whether the state has a right to persecute the individual for matters of conscience and the like. Such a thought had scarcely occurred to anyone as yet....

SIGNORA FAVILLI AND I have long chats. She is very interesting in her reminiscences. She was brought up at Anghiari, just this side of what were then the Papal states. She had relatives at Città di Castello, and every time she went to visit them it took an hour at the custom-house where they searched even her stockings. She told me that a cousin of hers was going to marry a nice young fellow who was rather open in his liberal opinions. One day he was overheard swearing in the street. So he was arrested by the "Sant'Uffizio" and condemned to pass a year in a niche where he could neither sit nor stand nor lie. He came out the colour of death, with his hair down to his waist, and his nails inches long. When his fiancée saw him again she fainted away with fright. What do you think of this sort of thing having happened almost in our own life-time, and what do you think of people who would have all this again? The Favilli says she remembers well the day Pius IX was crowned. She was with her relatives at Castello, and there was great rejoicing over the liberal-minded young pope. But her uncle asked them to moderate their gladness. *E un prete. Bastal* She tells me that after the enthroning of the present archbishop here, as they were marching from the duomo to the arcivescovado the crowd rotten-egged them. But she says sadly the young people nowadays find it hard to understand why we hate the Pope so....

I HAVE ALSO READ L. B. Alberti's treatise on love. He discusses in superb prose pitched in the tone of the *Imitatio Christi*, what sort of man a woman ought to take for a lover. He votes for the literary man, *for he can make immortal*, as Corinna and Lesbia were made. Isn't that the best of all illustrations to the passion the Renaissance had for fame?

TO MARY COSTELLOE

*Fiesole,*
*10 January, 1896*

YRS. OF 7TH RECEIVED. So sorry to hear you are ill and low. Cheer up to please me.

I write in haste. O. Gutekunst, 13–14 Pall Mall East, knows of a Velasquez wh. may do for Mrs. J.[2] I am very anxious that you should see it, as I do not like to deal in such big game without autopsy. Please be aware of your responsibility, but I should not ask you to do this, if I did not believe you as competent as any living person to have an opinion.

I want you to write to G. giving an appointment—with an alternative in case the one par-

[2] Mrs. Jack Gardner. The painting in question, a portrait of Philip IV, was at Colnaghi's at the time of this letter, and was in fact bought for Fenway Court through Berenson. Originally painted for a cousin of the Conde-Duque de Olivares, it was inherited by the Count of Altamira who sold it in London in 1827, whence it passed into the Bankes Collection in Dorset from which it was purchased by Colnaghi.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ticular day will not do—for him to take you to see the Velasquez. At the same time he will show you a Rembrandt of which also you must give an acute report, a Cuyp, and possibly some other things.

Il s'agit d'affaires énormes. Therefore "pull out thine eyes," and do this for me. It will spare me a trip to London.

To Mrs. Jack Gardner

*Fiesole,*
*6 December, 1896*

... This must be a hasty note to tell you that last night I cabled to you the mystic words bene, xvm, subito the which, interpreted as you will have, means "Send cheque for £15,000 at once." To my great regret and contrary to my expectation I could not get the V. for a penny less and was in fact glad to get it at that.

To Carlo Placci

*Fiesole,*
*7 April, 1897*

*My dear Carlo,*[3]

Thanks for the Idea Liberale which I have read with interest. I am half tempted to take up your challenge about Salisbury[4] and whether he also is "half-educated" because he prays. But what's the use! Arguments are of small avail except where common premises are assumed, and a common method of reasoning. But I may say that by "half-educated" I mean persons who seriously think that religious dogma can be defended as scientific principles can be.

I think a man of (relatively) perfect education may believe anything, but such a man will not try to defend his belief.

With you I have no bones to pick. If it does not estrange from me, or makes unpalatable one of the two dearest friends I have on earth I shall have nothing to say against your religion. I believe religion ... to be an expression of temperament. Religion is a form of art; taken as objective reality it is the art of the un-æsthetic; but taken consciously as subjective it is perhaps the highest form of beauty.

By the way it is very "half-educated" to distinguish between active and contemplative life. Without either the other perishes. So let us throw stones at neither.

Yours affectionately,

B.B.

To Carlo Placci

*Old England Hotel,*
*Bowness-on-Windermere,*
*7 August, 1898*

*Dear Carlo,*

Your last letter contained too little news about yourself. I was sorry to find that so late in July, and hot as it was, you still were staying on in Paris, exciting yourself about matters which are no business of yours physically and intellectually. After all, though, why should I be putting on this mentor's tone! If you like this sort of thing it is just the sort of thing you like.

I for my part have been pursuing different paths. I have seen a number of friends, done more or less real work, and re-visited Oxford and Cambridge. In both places I feasted my eyes on beautiful things, on picturesque gothic, on Italian architecture in some respects better understood, and more refined than any in Italy—good talk was also not wanting, on metaphysics and politics, above all on the advance of Anglo-Saxon civilisation, and culture. Humanity is at the best a poor and sordid affair, and Anglo-Saxon humanity is human. But it is less poor and less sordid, on the whole than any other whatsoever, and the world can not but benefit by its rule. For the world's sake I would have America and England conquer and control everything. But I doubt whether we should be improved by this Augean task, and so I am satisfied that none of us should take except just what we need, and what we can't help taking.

I do not bother my head too much about these matters. They will fall into shape no matter what you and I say or do. Surely it is much more profitable for each of us to spend our time on things that will make us happy as individuals, that will advance our souls. As for me I know that my own sensations, and my own ideas are to me of primary importance, because it is by them alone that I really live. Without them I should be a phonograph, and I prefer to be a man.

I am in love with the North. Here I am in the famous Wordsworth country, and truly charming it is. Robert Trevelyan,[5] a most delightful youth, who promises to be a real poet,

[3] Carlo Placci (1861–1941), Italian writer and art critic and a life-long friend of Berenson who offers a full portrait of him in his book *Rumour and Reflection* (originally in *Horizon*, June, 1946).

[4] Berenson is referring certainly to the celebrated third marquess who was at the time Prime Minister and also Foreign Secretary.

[5] Robert Calverley Trevelyan (1872–1951), man of letters, poet, translator of classical texts, elder brother of the historian George Macaulay Trevelyan.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is with me. In a day or two we shall plunge into the wildest Highlands of Scotland.

To Mrs. Jack Gardner

*Coronation Day, 1902,*
*Haslemere*

...If I live on I must earn a living. With all the experience I have had in buying and the control I could easily have of the market, advising about pictures is the path marked out for me. But you have now nearly had your fill. It is true I have several other friends and acquaintances who buy on my advice. But I could sell ten times as much as I do now without taking more trouble if only I had a larger circle of friends. I know I can rely on you to help me enlarge this circle, can't I? I want America to have as many good pictures as possible. You have had the cream. Other collections will only enhance the merit of yours....

Devotedly,

B.B.

*Grand Hotel de Paris, Madrid,*
*25 October, 1906*

...As the post goes in a few minutes I must be brief. It is about the Velasquez Pope. The lowest possible price is 500,000 frs. I had to use strong language and much plain speaking to get them down to that. They assure me that Roger Fry who has recently seen it will move heaven and earth to get the Metropolitan Museum to buy it and that he suggested 600,000 as a fair price. All that I cannot guarantee. But what I can tell you as a fact is that Mrs. Potter Palmer only waits for my approval of the picture to purchase it. Please keep this a secret. Still I wish you to let me know whether you want to make the desperate effort to raise so big a sum or whether you prefer to step aside.

Of course I may conclude that the picture though wonderful is not Velasquez....[6]

To Carlo Placci

*I Tatti,*[7]
*27 November, 1907*

*My dear Carlo,*

I am glad you like my last book.[8] Your appreciation has always been peculiarly dear to me, because few if any are more than you the audience I have in mind while writing.

As for the rest of your letter I simply do not know what it is all about. We parted last time on the most affectionate terms with the understanding that you were to return in a very few days. You did not appear, and I was disappointed. But assuming you had other things to do I was not offended. I let ten days pass and then wrote, unconscious then, as I am still, of any intention to offend. I do not know what you want of me. If you want me to change my character, my *Weltanschauung*, my manners, my habits, you must surely know that at 42 one *does not*. I am what I am, and as a quality not likely to change much. If this quality, such as it is and inevitably must remain, gets on your nerves, or if you are over-saturated with it, and it cloys on your palate, I shall have to submit to your distaste as one of the fatalities that life is full of. I shall regret it beyond words. You have in the course of the last 13 or 14 years meant more to me than any person in the world except my wife. I have loved you, and still love you, and *quand même* shall love you, as one does the people one has accepted without further chance of change, for better for worse, as one's own for ever. If you go back on me I shall receive a loss that nothing can repair. It will take away much of the pleasure in life. You may imagine that to ward off such a disaster I would do anything feasible. But it is not feasible to change essentially. I could promise, and flatter, and cajole, if I did not love you enough to take you in good earnest. If we continue to frequent one another it can only be on the old terms. I am not an Englishman, not even an Anglo-Saxon. You are not aware how little conscious *parti pris* I have in favour of their ways, but if I have their ways to the extent of being quite unaware that I have them, how can you expect me to get rid of them? And if *per impossibile* it were to be done, it would not yet mean that I could take on yours.

No, this is not to be dreamt of. For me you never have been an Italian, but *etwas Niedagewesenes*, namely Carlo Placci. To you I should be nothing but B.B., a very specific individual standing for nothing but himself. My relations

[6] In the event Mrs. Gardner did buy the painting referred to—an oil sketch for the head and shoulders of the seated portrait of Innocent X, Doria-Pamfili, which is in the Doria Gallery in Palazzo Doria in Rome. It had belonged to Prince Brancacci. Some present-day critics (Pauli, Panofsky) have questioned its authenticity.

[7] Berenson had rented the Villa I Tatti at Ponte-a-Mensola below Settignano in 1900. He and Mary moved in on 28 December, 1900. They acquired it after the death of the owner, Lord Temple Leader, from his heirs in 1905.

[8] *The North Italian Painters of the Renaissance.*



PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to you have been what my deepest relations have been and ever must be, purely individualistic. It never occurs to me to stand on ceremony with any real friend. I do not expect them to kow-tow to me, to consider my opinions, my prejudices. I do not try to force my convictions, my preferences upon anyone. I hate and avoid subjects for dispute. My attitude is implied, and if it makes itself felt offensively, it is a misfortune I regret, but being unintentioned, and indeed unconscious it is a thing I can not mend. Why then not continue to take me as you have taken me for so many years? The fraternal friendship between us has brought much joy to me, and simply has not been unpleasant altogether for you? Why end it for reasons I can not even understand? I hope and pray you will allow your affection, if that has not departed, to get the better of whatever grudges you may have against me. We all are full of grudges against our nearest and dearest, for no one meets all our requirements. Yet once we have felt that a person gives us all he can, and that that quality is good, it surely were sad to dwell upon the rest. I protest I am not worse but better, not less but more affectionate, and I trust not less interesting than ever. Then why suddenly turn around and see only the disagreeable side of me? I beg of you not to bring to an end, or to let die down a friendship so rare as ours. And whatever you decide to do, I warn you I shall always remain

Your loving friend

B.B.

To Professor Paul J. Sachs

*Florence,*
*31 January, 1916*

I am greatly touched too by your words on the war & the squalid never to be either forgotten or forgiven *gran rifiuto* that we have made as a nation. Americanism has been to many of us & not least to most of us expatriates, a religion almost more than a patriotism. And our country now had the chance, risking nothing essential, in taking an attitude that would have made her the supreme tribunal of the earth. All we needed to do was to declare our moral horror of Germany's doing at the very start & to excommunicate her. I am convinced that such a step not only would have given us the premier place in the world as a people, but would have hastened the Kingdom of Heaven on earth by centuries. Instead who more despised than we—not even a Greek is so despised.

To Miss Natalie Barney

*Settignano,*
*2 February, 1917*

I have just read *Du côté de chez Swann*. I certainly have never come across before anything that came so close to the revelation of my own innermost minutest but all-determining psychophysical reactions. Since early childhood have I been aware of them, and they have made me, but never before have I found them in books, let alone literature. Do you know Marcel Proust, and if you do tell me about him.

B.B.

To Carlo Placci

*Paris,*
*22 November, 1917*

*Dear Carlo,*

So you want me to go on with *inni ed elogi*, and the whole pack of swindling lies that has brought so low the country I love best on earth, and its people whom I regard as a marvellously gifted one. If Italy had among her own sons *one hundred* who loved her and her *real* people as I do, much that has happened would not have. I do here all I can for the *real* Italy and not the pseudo-Prussia of the last 30 years. I have joyous hopes for that real Italy, but of course I don't expect to be appreciated for my confidence and my pains.

Mary returns this evening. Come back and represent Italy. You are needed.

*22 December, 1917*

I understand fr. Mary that you have declared war ag. me for speaking ag. Italy. It is true that on arriving here I felt so bitter ag. yr. pro-Boches on the one hand and ag. yr. Nationalists on the other that I did speak ag. them. And if you think that these two parties are equivalent to the whole of Italy, then your accusation against me is perfectly justified. But in moments when your optimism rose as high as mine with regard to your own people I thought you as able as anyone, myself included, to realise that these two parties were Italy's worst enemies. I supposed that in accusing them I was defending and exonerating the Italian people. Unfortunately you seem to share the opinion of the wretched gang who would demand of me acquiescence in all the miserable offspring of Crispi-Giolittism, of the whole Triplice, of the *sacro egoismo* and *nostro-guerrismo* and accuse me of being an enemy of Italy if I don't.

If your representatives here had a grain of

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wisdom they would instead of conspiring ag. me, and muttering threats, attempt to use my knowledge, my authority, and my possible influence for the Italy we all love together. Their conduct is not only stupidly undiplomatic but I fear confesses that they find nothing in common between their Italy and mine.

As for you, my dear Carlo, we have been friends for half a lifetime, and quarrelled often, but there is in my heart under much annoyance and exasperation a profound affection for you.

I should be greatly distressed if this could never reach you again owing to your hardening your heart against me.

To Judge Learned Hand

*Florence,*
*15 December, 1922*

So the Cis-Rhenan Super-Boches persuaded you that they were frightened of the *ci-devant Boches ordinaires*, commonly called Germans! You bet! Haven't they been practicing being afraid ever since armistice day & Couéing themselves *à rebours?!?*

And yet they succeed badly. In their heart of hearts they fear not the German. Their narrow souls can hold no other great passion than the one that dominates them to the exclusion of other sentiments. That passion is hatred of England.

If you want to understand affairs in Europe never lose out of mind that under & behind everything is France's crazy hatred of England, Italy's stupid envy of England, Germany's fury with England, Holland's rage with England, Scandinavia's dislike of England, Spain's distaste for England & the Vatican's never-ceasing plotting for England's downfall.

So many & so dead-in-earnest are England's enemies that I should fear for the life of that one island in the sea of political misery if the Vatican did not infallibly bring about the opposite of what it was plotting against.

Laugh & call me a crank but read out these priceless words of mine to the one American besides myself who shows first rate aptitude for international affairs, I mean Alvin Johnson.

One of the most appalling fatalities of history was first England's & then our interference in the race between France & Germany as to which should be Boche-iest. It has produced a disequilibrium that it will take generations to right. And of course it can end but in one way. In this paradise which would be a heaven but for the snakes who tempt its Adams & Eves to eat of the apple of Bocherie, here we are, all "pretending" like five year olds that Santa Claus will bring us all things—yes all things, prosperity, peace, perpetual Sunday within, prestige, profit, first-super-ultra-prime-great-poweriness without. And all by believing in Mussolini σωτήρ & the *Stellone d'Italia*.

If you find time read Gogol's "Dead Souls" which has just been translated by Constance Garnett. It is slightly archaic, *doch bleibt es immer neu*.

To T. S. Perry

*Naples,*
*2 June, 1926*

I have at last made the acquaintance of B[enedetto]. Croce. Like most philosophers except Balfour, Santayana, Russell, W. James & Whitehead that I have known, he is very stupid or at least one-tracked in Wilsonian fashion. Also he is very ill kept altho he is rich & occupies the whole floor of a great palace in the heart of the town. But he is patently the most candid, innocent & goodest of Italians....

*Milano,*
*24 October, 1926*

No, I do not expect to be present at the opening of the enlarged Fogg. I never attend such functions if I can help it. The very few times I have I felt like a cheap clown. I cannot stampede myself & for the life of me I cannot let a crowd emotion sweep me away. So I avoid all occasions where conceivably I might be expected to appear as other than the petty biped that I am so painfully aware of being.

I am doing this part of the world for the revised edition of my list whereof I must have written more than once. And I am taking advantage of the occasion to see the early mediaeval things as I never did before. My greatest self-indulgence is grubbing in libraries, poring over very early illuminated MSS. You should have seen me at the Ambrosiana here, where 35 years [ago] his present Holiness[9] used to fetch & carry for me as his successor does now.

Ever yrs.

B.B.

[9] Cardinal Ratti, subsequently reigning as Pius XI, had for many years been Librarian of the Ambrosiana.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

To Henry Coster

*Constantinople,*
*3 October, 1928*

I was delighted with yr. letter of Sept. 11 which I found here. All that you say about politics in your country as well as abroad meets the witness in my own mind. I like particularly yr. clear grasp of the fact that the present instant is but a moment of a history which reaches back into infinity. We must willy-nilly act impulsively & too often without conscious reference to the past, but if it is understanding we are after the past cannot be too widely swept, too.

As I read the future from my acquaintance with the past, I take it that for two or three centuries at least we shall hold the central position in the world & be to a degree unknown since the better days of the Roman Empire the arbiters of the earth. I am so sure of this & I am at the same time so sceptical about our fitness for the task that it seems to me as if the highest duty of our governing classes is to educate themselves for their terrifying responsibility so as to come out of it with no worse stains & no worse corruption than has overtaken the British aristocracy. Unhappily I see few signs of preparedness & the burthen may be piled upon your shoulders in your life-time, Harry.

To Judge Learned Hand

*Florence,*
*24 October, 1931*

I am glad you had a favourable impression of Ascoli.[10] I hope he will learn conversational English soon enough to profit by it. It is one of the serious handicaps of international relations that so few European intellectuals speak any language but their own. It is no less unfortunate that diplomats, dreamers, disreputable "Counts" in search of rich wives do speak other languages than their own. So between those who have a lot to say & can't & those who have a lot to lie about & can, misunderstanding between nations is not diminishing.

I have been living here some forty years & I have never yet encountered an Italian intellectual whom I felt to be at all himself when speaking any other language than his own. And I know very few who catch all the natural spontaneity of expression when I am conversing with them in English.

So my instinctive course is to get French, Germans & Italians to speak their own language & put up with my misuse of it.

What a curse the confusion of tongues has been. If there were but one language, aphasia would be confined to relatively small & therefore harmless groups or even to individuals, whereas now I fear that the more people of different speech meet, the less they understand each other. The nearer they are to each other in speech the more dangerous the misunderstandings.

*17 November, 1935*

The weather is as perfect as it always seems to be when mankind is quaking. I remember just about this time of the year in 1914 remarking to Edmund Gosse on the glorious autumn we were having. He agreed & recalled it had been just as fine in 1870.

By the way, the most creative young writer of Italy, Alberto Moravia, is going to New York. He remembers meeting you at Consuma & would be grateful if you & Frances would hold out a hand to him. He wants to see all kinds of people. Write when you can, but never doubt of my affection.

*Wien,*
*6 October, 1937*

Most interesting yr. account of the visit to Santayana. I am truly happy to learn that he looked so young & vigorous & serene. Personally I wish him a long life & happy activity. Only I am no longer interested in what he has to say. Leisure fails me for reading commonplaces no matter how, like the chestnuts they are, they pop & smell savoury in popping. For that sort of thing my mind is as *complet* as the Paris buses used to be that stuck out signs to that effect.

Five & twenty years ago I told him that like a god he was careless of mankind, & his retort was "Yes, an Epicurean God." But that is just what I meant. I could make endless comments on his remarks, but abstain because you are a busy man....

To Ruth Berenson

[Advice in a letter of 1937 as to becoming an art historian.]

...I myself regret having wasted my talents in sowing and tending a field which has reaped nothing but weeds and thorns and brambles.

[10] Max Ascoli, now editor of *The Reporter*, an American fortnightly.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

To Edith de Gasparin

*5 January, 1939*

Thinking of Goethe and his great Commentator, your old friend [Houston Stewart] Chamberlain. I ask you *ohne Feindschaft* what he would think of the events and *Einstellung* in the country of his heart during the last few years. I wish I had a witch of Endor to raise him from the dead and ask him myself. I have all my life had a dread of facile doctrines about races nations systems. I was always aware that they would inevitably lead to blood and tears. What is happening is worse even than my worst fears.

To Judge Learned Hand

*Florence,*
*10 December, 1939*

Let me tell you that I had early in Oct. an encounter with Santayana. It was at the Hotel Danieli in Venice. He occupied two rooms over the entrance, probably as tumultuously noisy as any in Venice. That is his way of approaching life. He stayed in all day writing. He had to re-write all he had done last summer because a philosopher acquaintance occasionally disturbed the even tenor of his own thought. At table he read the newspaper. After dinner he went to the reading room & conned Nietzsche's

## *Light in Venice*

*Hotel Danieli,*
*Venice,*
*10 October, 1939*

The other day, *awaking from absorption in the newspaper, whom should I see before me but Berenson! We had one good talk: but the second (and last) already flagged and made me feel how little sympathy there is at bottom between people who don't like each other but like the same "subjects" or have similar professions. These "subjects" become different objects to two minds that have grown old and have grown apart in considering them. Berenson surprised me by talking with juvenile enthusiasm about "art" (as if we were still in the 1890s). There is an exhibition of Paolo Veronese here, where he said he was spending day after day rapt in wonder, and always finding fresh beauties in the pictures. I haven't yet been to the exhibition (I mean to go to-morrow: I am not* deliberately *wicked) but it is impossible for me now to regard "art," any more than traditional religion, as a supreme interest in itself. It is an illustration to history, and a positive joy when it really reveals something beautiful in the material or in the spiritual world. But the social world, the world of convention, to which the criticism of art belongs, has come to seem to me rather a screen that keeps the material and the spiritual worlds out of sight. This is because my philosophy is not humanistic or psychological, like that of most people nowadays, but combines old materialism with old Platonism: "babylonisch über einander getürmten" systems, as Goethe said of the churches at Assisi. But this comes of trying to penetrate and not merely to "experience" this world, and to penetrate it in every possible direction. I may be wrong, but I find great comfort in Nietzsche. He is not explicit, he is romantic but he* implies *my world of two or more storeys, if he does not draw its plan and elevation, as my architectural propensities lead me to do—without, I admit, any technical accuracy; because I am really a self-indulgent impressionist, like Nietzsche himself, and wish to sketch my buildings in perspective.*

In order to keep up *the game with B.B., however, I mentioned the constant pleasure I find in the light in Venice and in the aspects of the sky. "Yes," said he, "they were wonderful at catching those effects, due to the reflected light of the lagoon in the atmosphere. Paolo Veronese was supreme in rendering them." I thought of Titian and Tiepolo, but said nothing, because I don't really know or care who* painted *or who* saw *those harmonies most perfectly. Each probably saw a different effect, and painted it according to his own convention. What I care about is the harmonies themselves, which can't be had at second hand; they are strictly momentary and incommunicable; if you can get them out of a book or a picture, very well: but it would be an illusion to suppose that the* same *harmony had been felt by the poet or the painter. He had merely worked in a material, that could offer such harmonies eventually to the properly prepared mind; and his own interests—think of Shakespeare!—were probably much more mixed and hurried than those of a devout modern reader or connoisseur. It is lucky for B.B., in one sense, that he keeps the old flame alive; but I can't help feeling that it was lighted and is kept going by forced draught, by social and intellectual ambition, and by professional pedantry. If he were a real poet, would he turn away from the evening sky to see, by electric light, how Veronese painted it? . . .*

***George Santayana***

*Letter to Mrs. C. H. Toy.*

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*Gaia Scienza* in French translation. It was there I used to join him. He had enjoyed yr. visit & said you had scarcely changed since yr. student day[s]. I told him Hutch Hapgood spoke so affectionately of him in his, Hutch's, autobiography. He denied his acquaintance. I asked for news of his lifelong correspondent Mrs. Toy & with a snigger he told me she was too old to endure the Cambridge climate & had retired into the bosom of her Southern family where she was—a gurgle of sniggers—bored & unhappy.

As for myself, he asked what I was doing in Venice. I told him I was looking at the pictures. "Oh, I thought they had done all they could to advance you along the line of your ambitions." Not another word as to what I was living, writing, reading. I started the subject of Charles [Augustus] Strong[11] and he sort of belched back that they had fallen out over Franco, that himself was not really a fascist but that his patriotism as a Spaniard could not tolerate Strong's scepticism. Then he went to speak of his Spanish connexions in the most disparaging terms, glad on the whole they were all dead or as good as.

I pumped him about his own work & its reception by the public. He was very self-complaisant, said he was just finishing the *Realm of Spirit*, the last of the series.

I was rather surprised that he went out of his way to praise such an impudent petty charlatan as Ezra Pound.

All in all after several talks he left on me the impression of a very self-satisfied, rather maliciously cynical, sniggering, sneering old man. "He has nor wife nor child," nor friend nor foe, no needs except the elementary ones & yet is happy, consciously happy. He was eloquent about the advantages of old age. His only remaining problem is where to live, now that the Bristol in Rome has been demolished.

To Judge Learned Hand

*5 January, 1945*

WHERE SHALL I BEGIN after four years of interrupted correspondence! Rumours have reached you no doubt of my hiding during the Nazi-Fascist occupation. Only a few days ago I learned that at home evil tongues have been accusing me of having thought of my own safety only, leaving my wife at home to the tender mercies of the enemy. The facts are that Mary as a pure Aryan & immobilised invalid had nothing to fear, particularly as I left her not only in the care of three trained nurses but of Alda, Bertie & Cecil Anrep. They sheltered her from every annoyance when I Tatti was occupied by the Germans & did all that under the circumstances could be done for her comfort. Serious trouble came when our own troops were bombarding I Tatti as well as the place where I was hiding.

That was only as the crow flies, two miles away & thanks to the connivance of the German consul & the Italian police (who urged me to disappear) I remained safe & sound not only during the occupation but during the siege & terror of August. Nicky was with me all the time & during the siege we were entirely in the hands of Nazi *parachutists* & if Nicky had not been there to smooth them down with her intimate knowledge of the German language & German ways, it might have gone hard with us.

This is ancient history. I have been home 3 months feeling a collapse from the strain of the previous 12 months. Then I am on the shady side of 80 & tire easily & am apt to doze in the evening as old men will do. Moreover I am overwhelmed by uniformed callers at all times of the day & much time goes in reading periodicals, back numbers for years past, eager as I am to find out what Anglo-Saxon & French have been thinking these years. Yet I am eager to write, or rather to revise & prepare for print what I have written. As it is not about art I have a certain fear of what I may incur if I publish. . . .

To Mrs. Alfred Barr

*Florence,*
*3 March, 1945*

IF YOU READ the charter of the Metrop. Mus. you will find that it was started as an association of collectors who wanted each other's advice & a place for the safe keeping of their treasures. As late as J. P. Morgan Senior the Metrop. was only that. The Boston Mus. of F. A. has never been anything else. In short Art Matters are again where I found them 60 years ago. In those 60 yrs. I did what I could for collectors & collecting. All in vain. Charlatanism *cum* pedantry reign more absolutely than ever. On "what there remains of this Psalm" one might expiate at length & produce a best-seller. *Absit omen!*

[11] A student of philosophy and an old friend of Santayana with whom he had lived and travelled in much earlier days. Owner of the Villa delle Balze at Fiesole, built by Cecil Pinsent about 1910.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

To Peter Viereck[12]

*Settignano,*
*7 November, 1946*

*Du liebster aller wilden Männer,*

Thanks for both letters, e.g. Sept. 29 & Oct. 3, for inclosures, for photo of *my* godson & for yr. "Jews, French, Germans" & Wilson's Santayana, as well as for a parcel of *New Yorkers* including one on Hiroshima. The photo of Anya & baby is too charming. Kiss them both most smackingly for me. As to Salvemini. I have written & sent the Placci portrait but addressed them to Lowell House G.24. Please warn him to retrieve both. Have not yet received Sept. issue of *Poetry*.

I do not envy yr. gadgets. I'd be ready to forgo them all including telephones, electricity, autos if only I could recapture *la douceur de vivre* of the years before 1914. At the present rate of mechanisation we soon shall be entirely dependent on machines. There will be no soul to save & TOTALITARIANISM will have reduced us to atoms in a cosmic gadget. Perhaps "the youngs" will not mind, nay enjoy it even, & serve them right.

What can I tell you about myself! I read too much & write too little. I peruse too many dailies, weeklies, monthlies, quarterlies, semi & whole annuals & get less & less expressive. I say with the skunk who first smelled a motor-car, "What's the use!"

To Henry Coster

*Settignano,*
*16 November, 1946*

I SHALL NOT attempt to say anything about current events. The USSR is behaving here as in France with remorseless consistency. Yet I doubt whether here they will achieve their purpose. I know no European people so unlikely to yield to serious totalitarianism as the Italians. Even Stalin's most highly organised effort would break against their anarchy.

If you can find it or procure it, glance at Ch. Du Bos's *Journal 1921–1923* (Editions Correa, Paris). I find it fascinating.

[12] American poet-historian who was in Florence as a member of the P.W.B. (Psychological Warfare Branch) and was sent to I Tatti by the Italian Professor of English Literature, Mario Praz. B.B. became very fond of him and of his Russian wife. He jokingly called him "Der wilde Mann." The "wild man" is a frequent figure in German literature. Professor Viereck teaches history at Mount Holyoke College.

To Philip Hofer

*Settignano,*
*31 January, 1948*

I AM ALL AGOG to know who will be the new Foggocrat [i.e., Director of the Fogg Museum]. "A Youngster" you say. I hope no passionate surrealist, abstractist, iconologist, pseudopsychiatrist, or any other ist. I hope it will be somebody who takes an interest in the work of art as DING AN SICH, & not all the subtile, whopping, profound, shallow, toothsome, tasteless things that can be said about it. In short I hope & PRAY that it will be neither a Picassinière nor a German-minded person.

To Henry Coster

*Florence,*
*19 December, 1948*

JUST NOW I had a wrangle with a Communist who claimed that his religion would do for the world what Christianity did to the decaying Greco-Roman world: that it did barbarise it for a 1,000 years but produced in the end something finer than Greece or Rome had been. He ejected this jejune proposition as a parallel to what Communism was after, but I should like to investigate the question with you as a partner. Our civilisation is of course the product of Xianity but what would it have become had Xianity not intervened. I suspect at times that it was Goethe's *Stirb und Werde* or indeed the infusion of physically hardier blood poured in by the Nordics that brought about renovation.

To Professor Paul J. Sachs

*Settignano,*
*18 March, 1951*

*Dear Paul,*

. . . What little energy I retain goes in doing my utmost for the library. That and that alone I feel proud of, & Stalin permitting, may survive me.

My love to you both

B.B.

To Miss Jacqueline Bouvier

*Settignano,*
*6 July, 1952*

*Dear Jacqueline,*

Thank you for most unsatisfactory photos. Please get anybody to snapshot you and send me the result.

You write about Lee as if she had got tanglefooted on flypaper. I fervently hope it is not so. American girls should marry American boys. They wear better. It would life-enhance me to

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

see either or both of you—even if honeymooning —although that would make me jealous and envious.

You will find me at Vallombrosa till October. *Souviens-toi* of our first and only but so enchanting encounter? We go there in a few days.

To John Walker

*Settignano,*
*5 January, 1953*

*Dear Johnnie:*

I enjoy and love Hoffmann's, & Strauss's and Cole Porter's fancies, waltzes, tunes, but I do not place them along with the sublime music of Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. I love the Lanckoronski St. George, a pretty super-Xmas card—never an Uccello. I should love to own it, & I am sure it would attract "the people" if you put it in yr. N.G. But I cannot place it remotely on a level with the Mantegna St. Jerome you mention. I don't know why I let myself express disapproval of the price asked for the pretty picture. When I think of all that could be done with money, it raises my gorge to see it wasted.

To Roger Hinks

*Palermo,*
*14 May, 1953*

I AGREE WITH all you say about places, museums, persons. Yes, New England (especially as I knew it in my formative years) was perhaps more English (being still colonially nostalgic for the culture of the mother-country) than England itself. I knew villages in Western Massachusetts that hark back to early 18th century, still untouched by "modernism." In so far as I feel myself to be anything it is not [so much] an American as a New Englander. One of my real regrets is that New England has been (as it were) snowed under by America. I am glad you liked the two great Bellinis, the Feast of the Gods and the Saint Francis. You do not mention the Gardner Mausoleum. Did you not see it while in Boston?

...I am stopping over in Rome to see the Picasso exhibition. I do it to get material and detail for the verbal war I am carrying on and shall continue [to carry on] against that Satan, that fallen Angel of the arts.

To Lawrence Berenson

*I Tatti,*
*31 May, 1956*

...I venture to ask you to communicate [this] to Batista. It is no more nor less than to get out while the going is good. If he hangs on they will either kill him or end by kicking him out ignominiously. So he should get busy selecting and forming a *junta* to take over and leave Cuba to it for better or worse. Let us hope for better. I know I am recommending something heroic and seldom performed. The only case I can recall offhand is Sulla early in the first century B.C. in Rome.

To Walter Lippmann

*Florence,*
*19 February, 1957*

*Dear Walter,*

...I have no doubt you are as indifferent to press cuttings as possible, yet I enclose a long article about your last book in the *Corriere della Sera.*

I recall William James occasionally pulling press cuttings about himself out of his pocket and shyly showing them to me saying, "Naturally I don't care a bit but you know my wife enjoys them."...

To Lawrence Berenson

*Settignano,*
*19 February, 1955*

YOU CONFUSE ME in my conviction that I have failed of my mission. I should have been a poet, a novelist, an essayist & not an art-historian & *horribile dictu* an expert. Others can do that as well as I; but I was born with a message & have failed to deliver it....

*Copyright © 1964 b Houghton Mifflin Company*

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*Ezekiel Mphahlele*

# On the Long Road

## *From An African Autobiography*

*Lagos, August 14, 1957*

*Dear Mr. M——,*

*I am sure that by now you have received your air ticket money. We are looking forward to seeing you early next month when the school re-opens. It will be the first time for me and all the other teachers here to see a South African Negro. You are bound to like Nigeria and our people. We are all brothers, we black people of Africa, whether you are from the east, west, or south....*

JUST BEFORE I boarded the plane at Jan Smuts airport, my friend, Bloke, said to me: "If you ever feel you want to come back, Zeke, take lots and lots of booze to work the urge out of your system."

Thinking back on that day now, September 6th, 1957, I remember how numb I felt; numb from an overwhelming sense of inevitability that often fills one when the moment has come towards which one's efforts have within a short space of time been desperately gravitating. I had not given much thought to the question whether or no I was going to a better political and social climate. What mattered was the mere chance of escape.

Eighteen months, and I had not yet joined battle with my conscience or a desire to return. I had moments of deep thought, naturally. If I went back, what could I do outside the classroom from which I had been banned? Nothing. I had tried several times before my escape to rationalise on the problem of adaptation to a job—literally a job. I had tried to tell myself then that if I went about a job with as detached a mind as when one is urinating, spiritually uninvolved, I should conserve enough energy to write at night. But time after time I had come to realise that the effort of trying to detach oneself sapped one's energy. One soon found oneself shouting back at the boss and returning home with an inflated spleen. So it was no use trying out the same argument once I had got to Nigeria. I also asked myself if returning would alleviate the miseries of my people. I couldn't see it happening. Yes, there was always "the arts" and once back, I could be re-absorbed. But twenty years of this continuous patching up against a background of hunger and insecurity had given me a touch of cynicism.

Thirty-seven years of age in a country of tensions is too long for one suddenly to develop a sense of guilt over escape. Yet it is too long for one to forget, to be lost in the new-found freedom. One develops a habit of thinking about oppression, and I was still wiping off the sweat in which I woke up when I jumped physically out of the *apartheid* nightmare.

I was too baffled by this freedom to continue writing fiction, and the impact of the new life on me was so violent that certain of my standards of judgment were being severely tested. During the first fifteen months I taught in a boys' grammar school. The complacency of the boys struck me forcibly, and I became progressively annoyed by it. If only I could bring a bunch of African boys and girls from South Africa to Nigeria for their schooling, I thought wistfully. Boys and girls whose future is bleak in spite of all their keenness, vitality, and drive —boys and girls who are being challenged at every turn by the environment, by labels like *Europeans Only* at public places and entrances, the machinery of the white man's law, the white man's domineering attitude. . . . I was teaching mostly Yoruba students in Lagos. The small number of Ibo boys in the school were a source of inspiration: critical, self-confident, restless, challenging (even if sometimes obstructionist). Ibos are generally pushful; they have the guts to challenge authority. They seldom beg for favours, and I admire the man who does not beg for favours.



PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Complacency? Yes, coupled with the expert ability to take in all a teacher says like a sponge; and an indifferent sense of urgency. Later on I excused the complacency and the uncritical outlook; the social and political life of this country, unlike the harassing life of *apartheid*, must tend to induce self-satisfaction rather than insecurity. The restless and critical attitude of the Southern African student is often a subconscious revolt against his environment; it often falsifies human conduct and relationships.

I shared this experience with most of the fellow-South Africans teaching in Nigeria—then about twenty. They told me that their standards of discipline were very often misunderstood by their headmasters and Nigerian colleagues. They were said to exact too much from the pupils and to exercise too strict a code. This seemed to suggest the difference between the West African and the South African. The Nigerian in the classroom, in public service or business was, I found, apt to respect the textbook slavishly and to ignore happily the discipline that makes one start and finish to time, analyse results, assess a system of values and get to know the whole world that is related to his special job. The South African, teacher or no teacher, has been pushed and kicked about all his life until he has come to walk with his body leaning forward. He has to keep moving and doing something with that sense of urgency. Or else he trips and falls. The South African teacher keeps in school from 8 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. I suddenly realised how fastidious I had become in this "go-slow" machinery. So many Nigerians had been to British universities where I presumed competition was very high; the Nigerian student, even locally, had such unique opportunities and practically no political and economic tensions to worry about.

WAS I NEVER going to outgrow the habit of being on my guard when face to face with a European? I enter a department store and find all the assistants are Africans. A thing inside me thaws. Then I have to meet the manager—a white man. Immediately I tune my defence-mechanism. I rehearse my vocabulary in the South African idiom where words never seem to keep their referential meaning. And then what do I find?—a polite white man, exasperatingly neutral. I feel hollow because there is no need to exchange words or to assert myself.

Before my family arrived I lived in a school-house in Lagos. I asked a washerman who took the European schoolmistresses' washing to do my laundry. The ladies agreed to this. But they did not want him to wash my laundry on the same day as theirs. Lest they mixed. The washerman told me about this and I flared up. I was prepared to tell them, if they should mention it to me, that they needn't be put out, because I was used to such treatment in the south, but they never said anything about it to me, which deflated me somewhat.

I go to a bank and give a cash cheque to the teller. "Cheque for reference!" he bawls out as he pushes it into a hole in the wire net. I wait, prepared for quite a spell. I know, as everybody else does, how slow and easy life is in West Africa. A European comes and pushes a cash cheque towards the teller. Immediately he is given his money without reference formalities. (Now why should that be? I ask myself.) Yet another European comes and I am waiting, this time together with a lot of other Africans. His cheque does not need a reference. He gets his money without waiting. (If the teller knows the bank balances of these fellows, I muse, then bank clerks must have a most retentive memory. No, I say to myself, I've come here to relax and think. To convalesce. I shouldn't allow myself to be upset. But I still wonder....)

Later, when I was in an adult education programme, I had occasion to go to a town called Ilorin in the Northern Region. It is still a very colonial region, with "Residencies" and "D.O.s." Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Premier of the Region, was being knighted in London, and I was sitting in the catering rest-house in Ilorin, waiting to be served. Waiting in good old South African style (apart from the fact that black and white do mix in Nigerian public places). I called for something on the menu and waited. A bunch of Europeans entered and took a table. Two of them called for the same item I had asked for. The next thing I saw was food being carried to them. The same waiter served me, afterwards. It happened again and again. The fault of the Europeans? Hardly. They were not sheltered by a barricade of *apartheid* laws which protect their counterparts in South Africa. I put it down to that cardiac trouble which inflicts the whole of the Nigerian North: subservience to white people "who led us very gently and successfully to self-government," and a domineering attitude towards the peoples of the Eastern and Western Regions—"southerners," they are called in the North, and

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

almost equivalent to untouchables. The waiters were very nice to any Negro who came and talked their language (Hausa or Fulani). There was a register where we wrote our names and origins. It was easy for them to know what sort of customer they were dealing with—outsider or insider.

Once I arrived at the Ilorin rest-house and found two letters pinned on the notice-board, addressed to me and to a Nigerian. My letter asked me to vacate on the following night the châlet I had been assigned. Dr. Azikiwe (then Premier of the Eastern Region) and his parliamentary group were coming. I was sent to a drab-looking châlet. It had a sagged ceiling and a mud floor.

At once the letter pressed a buzzer; a message was vibrating through the sensitised fibre of my being. I scanned the list of occupants for the day. All Europeans—except the two of us who had been written to by the white supervisor. So! I thought—it's the darky who must be made to give way to another darky—cunning! Did the supervisor think a black man would feel proud where a European might feel humiliated? Could it be that some of the European occupants had received their own letters before we had arrived? Maybe there were other Negroes—with European names? . . . How could I be sure? The uncertainty annoyed me all the more. The Nigerian, according to the entry in the register, was from Lagos, and I had come from Ibadan—southerners? When I asked tactfully what his letter was about, he gave me a smile as broad as the Niger and said with an obvious exuberant pride: "Yes, I've also been asked to move. Dr. Zik's coming to-day!" Yes, I said, but I barely managed to put on a grin. Later I felt I had cheated myself out of some fun. I should have abandoned myself. I should have tried to enter into the same emotional state. . . .

But that is the pain of it. I am a product of *apartheid*. Having tasted the joys of freedom in Nigeria—freedom to move, to associate, to speak—and broken through some of the British-inspired conservatism among Nigerians, I always wonder how I managed to survive. For *apartheid* conditioned me to patterns of response which have with the passage of time become set and prescribed. Each day I've been keyed up to meet a new situation. I suspected I was in for victimisation as a black man. I was proved wrong, and how awkward I felt. It was like lifting a foot to go up or down a step which is not there. My momentum had already been committed, and the landing of the foot was jolting.

The challenge has continued to grin at me. There was one thing which I could not appreciate although I knew my view of it might very well be distorted. Some spectacles condition a man to an upside-down or grotesque world as if it were normal. For there are fears in Nigeria, fears on the part of minorities, and these are only exacerbated by the politicians. In the beginning the national constitution ensured that ethnic minorities within the regions be grouped together in separate states according to their cultural affinities. I thought of our battle against ethnic grouping in South Africa which the government has been enforcing in both school and home. I felt that so much of the work that had been done by African leaders to break down tribal barriers was being undermined. I seemed to hear Dr. Verwoerd's voice somewhere in the tangle of phrases the powerful Action Group was using to support the creation of "more ethnic states" in Nigeria. How could I consider the aspirations of the politicians, no doubt intensely sincere, with a mind unclouded by years of struggle against *apartheid* in all its forms? I was so sure about meanings in South Africa—could I know what was evil in another African context? Maybe there are those who *want* to be "grouped ethnically. . . ."

In a year my suspicions, hate, anger, and bitterness were consolidated. The sediment of it all was down there in the pit of my stomach, waiting for time's purgative. I came to know that the absence of any enemy—in this case, the White Man who had turned my years in this world against me—made the heart beat more furiously.

You are a product of *apartheid* and all the forces of oppression that go with it. Your personality has a set of windows, and they open and shut as often as outside stimuli demand a response from you. But the stimuli move within a very narrow range of relationships: in terms of black *versus* white, master *versus* servant, privileged *versus* unprivileged. You come to a different situation such as that in Nigeria, where master-servant and rich-poor relationships are not vitiated by colour conflict. You need to have new windows which do not open out on mine

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dumps and skyscrapers darkening African shanty towns; out on suburban white society and blacks in location camps; out on police armed with sten guns, tear gas, and batons, charging on men, women, and children. But alas, the windows you need to open here have been shut so long, oh, so long. You don't even know that some of them exist. You continue to open those shutters which have been swinging back and forth under the pressure of *apartheid*. And you realise that your responses were askew. When you eventually open other windows, they make a rusty creaking sound. How ecstatic I could suddenly become at the sight of the decency of the police in Nigeria—and how vitriolic against "Western standards" under very slight provocation...!

I HAVE NO romantic ideas about Africans or Nigerians, only a vague feeling that where race conflicts are negligible, Africans can treat one another decently. I have no illusions about the fact that the problem of haves and have-nots is a universal one (and that in Southern Africa it is only magnified by colour prejudice). But I was not prepared for the rude shock that assailed me. I saw times without number the manner in which Nigerians treated their domestic servants, chauffeurs, and other workers. A man who considers his social or economic status to be high, whether he is literate or not, treats his domestics in a way I have come to associate only with the white man in the south. As in the rest of Africa, the monied African is seldom literate.

"What I go do with books?" he says. "Na me want to see Governor General, I go see hum. Degree don't tok, mawny tok."

The educated Nigerian's position, as one of a class, has been elevated in the same exaggerated degree in which the educated man in Southern Africa has been beaten and trampled down and humiliated by whites. I was once at a meeting and the presiding officer had brought his chauffeur along. The driver sat in a distant corner of the room, holding his employer's briefcase. Every time the chairman wanted a document from his case, he gave a signal and the chauffeur rushed to give him the bag. The document was taken out and the brief-case carried back to the corner to wait for another signal a few minutes later. I used to be outraged by the sight of domestic servants walking miles and miles to and from the market with loads on their heads—in spite of the fact that their masters had cars. I was told: "They don't mind it...." Some of them "are relatives," cousins, brothers.

A BENIGN-LOOKING neighbour of ours from a house opposite came to see how we were settling down, just after our arrival in Ibadan. We told him our refrigerator wasn't working. Couldn't we keep our meat in theirs for the week-end? He agreed. I took out the meat, put it in a bowl, and held it out for him. He looked me up from toe to head with visible disgust. "My boy will come for it!" he said brusquely. I was literally stupefied. Should I have given the fellow a "demonstration lesson" by carrying the meat across the road myself?

A fellow South African teaches in a town 40 miles from Ibadan. His headmaster wanted to carry a large piece of mutton to his house about five hundred yards away. There was nobody (but himself) to put the meat into his car. So he drove to his house, ordered his servant to follow him on foot and put the meat into the car. At the house he waited for the servant to arrive and take the meat out. And South African blacks?—might they do the same if they could afford the luxury of a chauffeur or a domestic? They might.

It was difficult for my wife to strike up any real friendship among the women. She soon realised that it was not a common thing for them to return a visit; and yet they were most hospitable when they were around. Often they were not around, because a woman in Yoruba society has a different social programme from her husband's, and when a man invites you to "pop in," he does not necessarily mean his wife will be there when you come. Only the most sophisticated arrange it that way. Ibos and mid-Westerners opened up more readily. Perhaps being themselves isolated in Yorubaland, the Ibo women were happy to get allies.

We were all accepted by the men, Yoruba or not, without any visible reservations. Sometimes we sensed a similarity between our behaviour patterns. At other times the vaunted "African personality" crumbled. But the fact that we belonged to no West African ethnic or tribal or language group made it easy for us to travel light among Yoruba, Ibo, Hausa, who are highly suspicious of one another. On some occasions I even sensed an attempt on the part of Nigerians to use me as a buffer or shock absorber in the strong conflicts of tribal arrogance.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A fellow South African teaching in the Eastern Region once wrote to me: "Nigerians, who otherwise could be very sporting chaps, have this great weakness—the way they take themselves so seriously. No sense of humour except when it is at someone else's expense. Their mistake is in apeing the British. They are only copying what the British were two generations back—descendants of the Victorian age of false modesty and pretentious decorum. They are as rigid as plaster and they practise a social caste system undreamt of in South Africa...." I do not think the analogy with the British is really as simple as this, but there is truth here, although Nigerians dislike the imputation of fissures in their "Africanism."

I remember suggesting to South Africans teaching in Ghana (I was there in December, 1958) that "it would be a great pity if we grouped ourselves into a colony in order to resist assimilation...." Some agreed with me, others did not. But it was not easy to sink our identity; as a group we felt so strongly about the oppression of the millions we had left behind. We were probably as unassimilable as a pebble in a mouthful of rice.

Some South Africans in the West have come out to seek adventure, and they do not care to speculate on their social position in the host country. I worried so long about the problems of "roots" and "identity" and "integration" until I didn't know whether I wanted to be integrated into Nigerian society or not. Perhaps it was just as well we had not come to the West out of a sense of mission but for sanctuary. We had to be taken for what we were worth.

THE EUROPEANS in Nigeria—how do they fit in? The teachers seemed to be the hardest-working of the lot (even considering their privileges). The others, in government and business, looked like soldiers of fortune. In a rest-house bar the opening conversational gambit, like weather in England, is "What department are you in?" Here are the traders, merchants, commercial representatives, and civil servants. A man from the Public Works Department comes in, looking desperately wan, shuffling along with a prehistoric gait. He sits and begins to complain about his African workers: "...lazy...no sense of urgency... shamming illness...they can never do without us whites...." And he belches importantly at intervals for emphasis. Or nowadays there is gossip about their "African superiors" (*nomen et omen*)....

A European friend put it like this to me one day: "Of course, you as a South African are, like us British expatriates, not involved in this set-up. But we're in a better position. We represent a source of authority, a power of some obvious sort. We can be badly mistaken and still be listened to with respect. But you couldn't venture an opinion here because you don't represent anything the Nigerians recognise as an existing force...." This was several years ago. Since then, the defence pact Nigeria made with Britain when she became independent in 1960 has been vehemently challenged and has now been revoked. In 1959 Nigerian students for the first time had demonstrated their protest against the imprisonment of Dr. Hastings Banda. Demonstrations were held after Sharpeville and the death of Lumumba. A general mood has been building up against the West in (former Premier of Western Nigeria and once talking of Nigeria as a republic. Chief Awolowo (former Premier of Western Nigeria and once leader of the Opposition in the Federal House of Assembly) used to be regarded as the last bastion of all the political institutions Nigeria had inherited from Britain. But now even he has suggested that Nigeria join the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union (and, anyway, is at present in jail).

COLOUR-CONSCIOUS Europeans in West Africa do not (and cannot) make their presence felt (even if they were stupid enough to try). They tend to be forgotten. The academic lot in Ibadan keep to themselves, either because they are bogged down in the mire of pseudo-Oxbridge academic snobbery from which they dare not save themselves or because they are products of a culture of formal invitations, over-privileged exclusiveness, and stock labels.

Oh, how easily I talk about the difficulties of adjustment. But it is not at all easy to describe the kingdom of freedom I moved in and what it did to me. You have to feel it yourself to know it, to know that the immigrant's journey is on a long, long road. As he goes on he is somehow at the same time making a spiritual journey back through a tunnel. The thudding footsteps of nearly 40 years' torment beat down on him, threatening to deafen and confuse him. Things around him dance about and dart out of perspective. Is that why freedom tastes sweeter and is a better tonic?

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*Czeslaw Milosz*

# Throughout Our Lands

When I pass'd through a populous city
(as Walt Whitman says, in the Polish version)
when I pass'd through a populous city,
for instance near San Francisco harbour, counting gulls,
I thought that between men, women, and children there is
something, neither happiness nor unhappiness.

2

At noon white rubble of cemeteries on the hill-sides:
a city of eye-dazzling cements
glued together with the slime of winged insects
spins with the sky about the spiralled freeways.

3

If I had to show what the world is for me
I would take a hamster or a hedgehog or a mole
and place him in a theatre seat one evening
and, bringing my ear close to his humid snout,
would listen to what he says about the spotlights,
sounds of the music, and movements of the dance.

4

Was I breaking the sound barrier?
And then clouds with cathedrals,
ecstatic greens beyond wrought-iron gates
and silence, surprisingly, different from what I'd known.
Here I am where the fist of an old woman is wrapped with a rosary,
a cane patters on flagstones between dappled shadows.
Is it a shame or not
that this is my portion?

5

Waking before dawn, I saw the grey lake
and, as usual, two men trolling in a motor boat, which sputtered slowly.
Next, I was awakened by the sun shining straight into my eyes
as it stood above the pass on the Nevada side.
Between the moment and the moment I lived through much in my sleep
so distinctly that I felt time dissolve
and knew that what was past still is, not was.

And I hope this will be counted somehow in my defence:
my regret and great longing once to express
one life, for not my own, but a different glory.
Later on a slight wind creased the iridescent water.
I was forgetting. Snow glittered on the mountains.



PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

6

And the word revealed out of darkness was pear.
I hovered around it hopping or trying my wings.
But whenever I was just about to drink its sweetness, it withdrew.
So I tried Anjou—then a garden's corner
scaling white paint of wooden shutters,
a dogwood bush and rustling of departed people.
So I tried Comice—then right away fields
beyond this (not another) palisade, a brook, countryside.
So I tried Jargonelle, Bosc and Bergamot.
No good. Between me and pear, equipages, countries.
And so I have to live, with this spell on me.

7

With their chins high, girls come back from the tennis courts.
The spray rainbows over the sloping lawns.
With short jerks a robin runs up, stands motionless.
The eucalyptus tree-trunks glow in the light.
The oaks perfect the shadow of May leaves.
Only this. Only this is worthy of praise: the day.

But beneath it elemental powers are turning somersaults;
and devils, mocking the naïve who believe in them,
play catch with hunks of bloody meat,
whistle songs about matter without beginning or end,
and about the moment of our agony
when everything we have cherished will appear
an artifice of cunning self-love.

8

And if Pascal had not been saved
and if those narrow hands in which we laid a cross
are just he, entire, like a lifeless swallow
in the dust, under the buzz of the poisonous-blue flies?

And if they all, kneeling with poised palms,
millions, billions of them ended together with their illusion?
I shall never agree. I will give them the crown.
The human mind is splendid; lips, powerful,
and the summons, so great, it must open Paradise.

9

They are so persistent, that give them a few stones
and edible roots, and they will build the world.

10.

Over his grave they were playing Mozart
Since they had nothing to keep themselves distinct
From the yellow dirt, clouds, wilted dahlias
And under a sky too big, there was too much silence.

And just as at the tea-party of a princess
When a stalactite of wax drips out the measure,
And a wick sizzles, and shoulders in frock coats
Gleam in their rows of high gold-braided collars,

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mozart has sounded, unwrapped from the powder of wigs,
And suspended on trails of late-summer gossamer
Vanishing overhead, in that void where
A jet has gone, leaving a thin white seam.

While he, a contemporary of no one,
Black as a grub beneath the winter bark,
Was at work already, calling in rust and mould
So as to vanish, before they took the faded wreaths.

11

Paulina, her room behind the servants' quarters, with one window on the orchard
where I gather the best apples near the pigsty
squishing with my big toe the warm muck of the dunghill,
and the other window on the wall (I love to drop the bucket down
and scare its inhabitants the green frogs).
Paulina, a geranium, the chill of a dirt floor,
a hard bed with three pillows,
an iron crucifix and images of the saints
decorated with palms and paper roses.
Paulina died long ago, but is.
And, I am somehow convinced, not just in my consciousness.

Above her rough Lithuanian peasant face
hovers a spindle of humming-birds, and flat calloused feet
are sprinkled by sapphire water in which dolphins
with their backs arching
frolic.

12

Wherever you are, colours of the sky envelop you
just like here, piercing oranges and violets,
the smell of a leaf pulped in your fingers accompanies you
even in your dream, birds are named
in the language of that place: *towhee* came to the kitchen,
scatter some bread on the lawn, *juncos* have arrived.

Wherever you are, you touch the bark of trees
testing its roughness different yet familiar.
Grateful for a rising and a setting sun
wherever you are, you would not manage to be alien.

Was Father Junipero an alien, when on mule-back
he came here, wandering through the deserts of the south.
He found redskin brothers. Their reason and memory
were dimmed. They had been roaming very far
from the Euphrates, Pamir, and the heights of Cathay,
slowly, as far as any generation can,
pursuing its goal: good hunting grounds.
And there, where later the land sank into the cold
shallow sea, they had lived thousands of years,
until they almost completely forgot the Garden of Eden
and did not learn the reckoning of time.
Father Junipero, born on the Mediterranean
brought them news about their first parents,

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

about the signs, the promise, and the expectation.
He told them, exiles, that there, in their native land,
their guilt had been washed away, just as dust is washed
from their foreheads, sprinkled with water.
It was like something they had heard of long ago.
But, poor people, they had lost the gift of concentration
and a preacher had to hang from his neck a roasted flank of deer
in order to attract their greedy eyes.
But then they slobbered, so loudly, he could not speak.

Nonetheless it was they who in my place took possession
of rocks on which only mute dragons
were basking from the beginning, crawling out of the sea.
They sewed a cloak from the plumage of flickers, humming-birds, and tanagers,
and a brown arm, throwing back the mantle, would point to: this
and the land was henceforth conquered: seen.

13

Whiskers of rabbits and downy necks
of yellow-black ducklings, the flowing fire
of a fox in the green, move both
master and slave. And also music
starting under the trees. A snare drum, a flute
or a concertina or from a gramophone
the voices of djinns bleating jazz.
A swing goes up to the clouds, and those looking from below
have their breath taken away by the darkness under a skirt.
Who has not dreamt of the Marquis de Sade's *chateaux*?
When one *a a a* rubs his hands
and to the job: to gouge with a spur
young girls drawn up in line for a footrace
or to order naked nuns in black-net stockings
to lash us with a whip as we bite the bedsheets.

14

Cabeza, if anyone knew all about civilisation, it was you.
A bookkeeper from Castile, what a fix you were in
to have to wander about, where no notion,
no cipher, no stroke of a pen dipped in sepia,
only a boat thrown up on the sand by surf,
crawling naked on all fours, under the eye of immobile Indians,
and suddenly their wail in the void of sky and sea,
their lament: that even the gods are unhappy.
For seven years you were their predicted god,
bearded, white-skinned, beaten if you couldn't work a miracle.
Seven years' march from the Mexican Gulf to California,
the hu-hu-hu of tribes, hot bramble of the continent.
But afterwards? Who am I, the lace of cuffs
not mine, the table carved with lions not mine, Doña Clara's
fan, the slipper from under her gown—hell, no.
On all fours! On all fours!
Smear our thighs with warpaint.
Lick the ground. Wha wha, hu hu.

California, 1961

***translated from the Polish by Czeslaw Milosz and Peter Dale Scott***



PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# FILM

## Critics in the Dark

*By Lawrence Alloway*

THE dominating figure in Anglo-American film criticism has been James Agee. For most people his reviews have been (to quote a forgotten film critic Harry Alan Potamkin) like films present "only in the movie-goer's reminiscences." Now a selection of his criticism *Agee on Film*[1] from *The Nation* and *Time* in the 1940s pulls the cult-figure out of shadowy reminiscence into the open where anybody can read him. His essay *Comedy's Greatest Era* is to film criticism what Hazlitt's essay on Poussin's *Orion* is to art criticism, a strong personal response brilliantly and movingly recorded. Here is Agee on Buster Keaton:

> No other comedian could do as much with the dead pan. He used this great, sad, motionless face to suggest various related things: a one-track mind near the track's end of pure insanity; mulish imperturbability under the wildest of circumstances; how dead a human being can get and still be alive; an awe-inspiring sort of patience and power to endure, proper to granite but uncanny in flesh and blood. Everything that he was and did bore out this rigid face and played laughs against it. When he moved his eyes, it was like seeing them move in a statue. His short-legged body was all sudden, machine-like angles, governed by a daft aplomb. When he swept a semaphore-like arm to point, you could almost hear the electrical impulse in the signal block. When he ran from a cop his transitions from accelerating walk to easy jog-trot to brisk canter to headlong gallop to flogged-piston sprint—always floating, above this frenzy, the untroubled, untouchable face—were as distinct and as soberly in order as an automatic gearshift.

But if instead of single essays we compare collections of criticism by Agee and Hazlitt, a problem of the film critic emerges. When Hazlitt ranged from *Richard III* and *Hamlet* to *Trickery's Fair in Love* and *What's a Man of Fashion?* in *A Review of the English Stage*, he was secure in the knowledge that he possessed a core of classics to which he could perennially return. Agee's weekly reviews record the dilemma of a writer hungry for masterpieces, but who had to spend most of his time seeing works intended for short, happy lives. In the absence of a recurring body of masterpieces Agee tried to invent them, which resulted in his frantic over-estimation of films by Laurence Olivier, John Huston, and Georges Rouquier. Rouquier's *Farrebique*, for example, is declared to be:

> one of the finer works in the whole great line of rural art which extends backwards through Van Gogh and Brueghel to the *Georgics* and to the *Works and Days*. It combines the cold deep-country harshness of Hesiod with a Virgilian tenderness and majesty.

Not bad, for one film. The weeks such films were not playing (*i.e.*, most weeks), and he was faced with writing about short-term, ephemeral works, Agee made an exhibition of his maladjustment.

Half-way through *Agee on Film*, with its continual witty, eloquent, and eventually tedious denigration of pop movies, I realised that these films of the late '40s, which made Agee hanker for the '30s and '20s, were the first movies that I saw which I still remember. My "movie-goer's reminiscences" tell me that there was something in the films that Agee missed but which, in all simplicity, paying for my own seat, I got, and which other people must have got (look at the box office receipts after the war). Take Agee's review of *I Walk Alone*:

> Good performances by Wendell Corey and Kirk Douglas; a sharp scene about an old-fashioned gangster's helplessness against modern business methods. Some better than ordinary night-club atmosphere. Otherwise the picture deserves, like four out of five other movies, to walk alone, tinkle a little bell, and cry "Unclean, unclean."

This film, produced by Hal Wallis, one of a

[1] *Agee on Film*. Reviews and Comments by JAMES AGEE. McDowell, Obolensky (New York) and Peter Owen (London), 45s.



PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cycle of dark, moody crime films, was a favourite of mine. The competition of upright, out-of-date, jailbird Burt Lancaster and treacherous, modern, adjusted Kirk Douglas, was rich in irony as well as violence. The night-club in movies of the time was a symbolic scene, like the Machiavellian Renaissance palace in Jacobean tragedy. It was an area of nocturnal leisure, where fashion and violence joined, where chance encounters were luxuriously framed, and it gave Lizbeth Scott a chance to sing. But Agee had *no* eye for this kind of urban imagery, a dream maybe, but a topical and knowing one. He never learned to respond to movies as a commentary on the present, compounded of both topicality and fantasy. He had no sense of film cycles, only of the Seasons. Movies are a popular art, but not in the way that Mexican sugar skulls and paper dolls are pop art. The skulls and dolls, though expendable, have an unchanging ritual significance. The movies, on the contrary, are the index of a Baudelairean art of modern life. "Modernity is that which is ephemeral, fugitive, contingent upon the occasion," to quote Baudelaire's *The Painter of Modern Life*. The topicality and mobility of the movies are one cause of the difficulty we have in remembering films precisely. Nicola Chiaromonte in the March 1960 ENCOUNTER wrote that "the peculiar pathos of film images lies in their evanescence" and attributed this evanescence to their unstoppable flow. But the film's status as a condensation of topical forms and ideas also resists compact, verbal summary. It is continually dissolving into its connections with environment, politics, personalities, fashion.

THE movie occupies time ambiguously. Plot and style, infused with the ephemeral and the occasional, rest on a moment; but the time a movie takes to make, and the time it is supposed to be distributable after the big-city first-runs, introduce a need for generalisation, though of a special sort. In screen fashion, as has been pointed out, fashions of the day are heightened and made fantastic, so that women can respond to the general look of a dress, but not be able to fault its details too quickly. Thus, topicality and timelessness support each other, for a few years. Once the original basis is forgotten, of course, the fantastic visible form dates and withers rapidly; but while the convention has current roots, it supports naturalistic and fantastic elements. It can be simultaneously laconic (by drawing on intimate knowledge) and baroque (in its elaboration of current occasions).

Agee, however, paid no attention to this carefully-timed expendability. He had an idea of what a film should be and responded passionately to approximations, fragments, and ruins of these ideas in the films he actually saw. Through this twisted pageant, he got flickering glimpses of what he wanted. As a matter of fact, he needed the junk to express the ideal. His criticism rested on a squashed birthday cake of commonsense, artistry, sincerity, and love (qualities we naturally value, but which are notoriously hard to locate and agree on in works of art). He was protected from his own mawkishness by the aggressiveness of his innocence, which was always shooting holes in films or, at least, bouncing off their glossy sides. Thus, somebody like W. H. Auden, who said he didn't go to the pictures but thought that Agee was marvellous, received from reading him a kind of Platonic drama—of Truth, its flawed forms, and a pure observer.

Though Agee worked for *two* New York magazines he carefully husbanded his childhood and rural origins. As a country boy at the movies he was fantastically sentimental. His own honest-type sentimentality was forever outraged at other people's sentimentality, which could only be to make money. Agee was passive and lost before his own feelings. Each time he saw a documentary of World War II he had the problem: what right had he, a civilian, to be witnessing the battle? As he watched the violence (and American combat films were less squeamish than British), his guilt mounted in egotistical waves.

A second American volume of *Agee on Film*,[2] which is a collection of his original film scripts, makes clear what it was he wanted films to be. Period and childhood references gave his screen plays a distance and warmth which is very similar to the nostalgia which underlay the detailing and the momentum of *Comedy's Greatest Era*. His instructions for a two-shot in *The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky* is characteristic:

> for a few moments we merely HOLD on them, as though this were a provincial wedding portrait of the period (circa 1895).

*The Night of the Hunter* moves with a dreamy slowness through rural America in the Depression. The funny, unconvincing English speech he wrote for *The African Queen* gives Rose and Allnut a touching and archaic flavour, like a reverie on the courtship of one's parents, when you are of an age to be close to it in understanding and yet stricken by its remoteness in time. Agee's insight needed distance as a medium: desire is nostalgically sited; passion is set back in time; and all images turn, or are about to turn, into souvenirs. Agee, gifted though he was as a writer, was too idiosyncratic and naïve to do film criticism as a whole much

[2] *Agee on Film. Volume 2.* Five Film Scripts by JAMES AGEE.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

good. His influence lies mainly in the two-line jokes with which so many critics respond to two-hour films. These jokes have become very attenuated, written as they are mostly for people (readers of weeklies) who will not be seeing the films.

IT IS more than sixty years since Edison's Vitascope was demonstrated in New York, long enough for a decent body of film criticism to have accumulated. *Film*,[3] a long anthology hopefully described as "a diverse collection of outstanding writing on various aspects of the film published from 1923 to 1957," makes it pretty clear that such a corpus is missing. Daniel Talbot's choice has the kind of limpness that happens when an editor with no ideas of his own gets no lift from his material. Lacking the support of a tradition or a standard in film criticism, the editor has made a passive selection of routine pieces. For example, Talbot is helpless before the fact that there has been no unified theory of cinema since the silent films of the '20s. Montage theory was the first—and last—sustained attempt to analyse films as seriously as paintings or poems. Feeble efforts were made to apply montage theory to sound, but these diverged fatally from what really happened. The zombie prestige of montage, however, is Talbot's licence for reprinting chestnuts like the following application of montage theory to image-sound combinations:

> if a scene is enacted, say, in a night-club and one hears the same music, we will know that we are in the same night-club even if in the shot itself we see nothing but a hand holding a flower (Béla Balázs).

Thirty years ago this may have seemed pretty significant, but to-day it is comic. Talbot reprints other archaic material, not simply as history but as principle. He editorialises that Rudolph Arnheim shows

> very convincingly how each technical advance—sound, colour, 3D—has worked against the artistic potentialities of the film medium.

It is typical of Talbot's editorial judgment that he is content to reprint a condemnation of technological developments written in 1933, largely *before* the event. Arnheim was writing in defence of montage, as is clear from such observations as this:

> if film photographs gave a very strong spatial impression montage would probably be impossible.

This was acute, and what an alert editor would have done is to find somebody to chart the anti-montage spatiality and cutting for continuous action of movies (Hitchcock and Minelli in the '40s), culminating in the wide screens of the '50s (for example, Henry King's and Henry Hathaway's CinemaScope films).

> The increased size of the screens will render any two-dimensional or three-dimensional composition less compelling.

Arnheim was entitled to think this thirty years ago, but why not measure his *theory* against the *work* in 'Scope of Samuel Fuller, George Cukor, Nicholas Ray, and Douglas Sirk? The only writer who covers the wide screens (Pauline Kael) cannot overcome one of those blocks common to conservative critics of technological changes in communication:

> if an audience can accept *Mambo* as a serious film, how is it to know, the next week, that *Many Rivers to Cross* is supposed to be funny?

The simultaneous presentation of big and small events in newspapers and the interlocking of editorial and advertising matter in magazines has similarly been supposed to confuse audiences. As Patrick Hazard has pointed out, movable type is the last technological invention that conservative humanists welcome; anything else, from colour-printing to CinemaScope, is supposed to lower standards, induce passivity, and so on. Attempts to impose norms of literary order or artistic presentation on the mass media are a poor substitute for a fresh response to the real situation created by the mass media's vividness and coverage.

THE SEARCH BY FILM CRITICS for works of permanent value to arrest the flow of a quick-dating medium has the effect of making them remarkably unobservant of changes in plot and technique. An example of the desire for fixity is *The Westerner* by Robert Warshow, who defined the Westerner grandly as "a figure in repose," "not compelled to seek love." Warshow nominated *The Virginian* as "archetypal Western;" it was made, the version he had in mind, with Gary Cooper and Walter Huston, in 1929, based on Owen Wister's book of 1902. Warshow tried to freeze the Western at an early point of stylised morality. The trouble is, his formula failed to cover the new Westerns which had appeared even before he wrote his article in 1954. Since *The Virginian*'s day heroes have become more desperate and violence more brutal and ironic (from *Ramrod* to *The Tall T*).

The connection between movies and art (or literature) is rarely taken beyond a search for creative individuals and their masterpieces. Serious comparative studies of movies and other arts are so rare that one can only suppose that film critics want merely the prestige that

[3] *Film: an Anthology*. Edited by DANIEL TALBOT. (New York, 1959.)

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

belongs to painting and literature. The comparison can be taken beyond this, however. Georges Méliés (quoted by Bardèche and Brasilach in Talbot's volume) wrote that "the art of cinematography" called on the resources of "drawing, painting, the drama, sculpture, architecture, mechanics, and manual labour." Even at an early stage the cinema was recognised as a compound form; later, with technical advances, the contributing arts have increased in number and in inter-relation. In Talbot's book only the art historians Élie Faure and Erwin Panovsky (whose *Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures* is the best piece in the book) observe and understand the aggregate nature of films. The cinema's relation with art lies less with the Japanese ideogram (Eisenstein) than with the art-synthesis proposed by Wagner, the totalwork to which all arts contribute. The realisation of Wagner's programme, in a form that produces engrossing illusions, by the co-ordination of many techniques, is a connection between films and art that could usefully be studied. (1) It would enable stereotyped ideas about the relation of the visual and the literary content of movies to be revised, such as the crude notion that films with fat dialogue scripts are "static" and "theatrical" and less purely cinematic than outdoor movies with galloping horses. (2) It would enable the collective nature of film-making to be discussed in subtler terms than that of one man (John Ford or Ingmar Bergman) imposing his "creative vision" on inert technicians. (3) It would, also, make possible the tracing of a history of the movies past the silent period without a break, which is more than can be done with montage theory.

By my count, less than half the contents of Talbot's book was worth reprinting. Nicoll, Stern, Kennedy, Grierson, Kael, Seldes, Bluestone, Balázs, Arnheim, Payne, Sadoul, Miller, Johnston, Ross, and Hecht waste space. Grierson, Seldes, Balázs, and Arnheim could have been better selected and Lester Asheim (who is not mentioned in the bibliography) has treated film adaptation of novels much better than George Bluestone. Despite Talbot's claim to have based his anthology on "several years of pleasurable reading in libraries and museums" his bibliography is narrow and unhelpful and notes like the following reveal holes in his reading. He introduces a selection from Leo Rosten's *Hollywood* with these words: "although the book was written in 1939–40, his picture of life in Hollywood remains substantially unchanged." But Rosten doesn't think so; in *Hollywood Revisited* (*Look* Magazine, 1956) he listed changes, all in the direction of "seriousness," "responsibility," and the like. Talbot prints nothing by Harry Alan Potamkin (1900–33), whose *Pabst and the Social Film* (in *Hound and Horn*) is the model of all those articles by intellectuals in which film-makers with good intentions are shown their errors. But none of the later jobs of ideological outwitting (Parker Tyler on John Ford in *Magic and Myth of the Movies*, Dwight Macdonald on Dore Schary in ENCOUNTER, July, 1959) can touch Potamkin for knowledge, intelligence, and film sense.

INTERESTING comment on pop movies, as opposed to unintelligent attack and unintelligent praise, is almost non-existent. The only article in Talbot's oppressive anthology which reveals an uninhibited taste for pop movies is by Manny Farber. Fanatically he praises hard, competent small-screen directors (at the expense of big-screen directors) and defines, sentimentally but acutely, their special audiences in small cinemas. Aside from such rare exceptions it sometimes seems that only sociologists, among the class of people who put their opinions into written form, actually enjoy current releases. A chapter of Martha Wolfenstein's and Nathan Leites' *Movies: A Psychological Study* is reprinted by Talbot, and as they go through films of 1945–49 they reveal powers of observation and interpretation which are virtually unknown to professional film critics (compare Agee's reviews of the same period). Their advantage was that they were studying typical films, not just waiting for exceptional ones. What the film critic, who sits blindly through films week after week, could be expected to do is to contribute to an æsthetic of the typical film. Almost no work has been done in charting film cycles, for example. At present, a big early film in a cycle has a chance of favourable reviews, but later ones will be criticised as mere repetition, cases of commercialism exploiting and devaluing a once-only idea. In fact, a cycle explores a basic situation repeatedly, but from different angles and with accumulating references. Ten years ago there was the Weapon-western, which included *Winchester 73*, *Colt 45*, *Springfield Rifle*, *Only the Valiant* (Gatling gun), and *The Battle at Apache Pass* (cannon). These and other films were not only about the power new weapons gave their owners, but about the social impact and consequences of new weapons. Later Westerns lost none of the technical precision of the Weapon-western, but interest shifted to operational lore and responsibility (*Gunman's Walk*, *The Tin Star*, *The Young Guns*, *Saddle the Wind*): another cycle. The unit to be analysed in discussing pop films is often not the single movie but the cycle as it provides the audience with a flexible, continuing convention and a body of expectations and knowledge on which the film-maker can count. The subtle

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

relations that exist between producer and consumer in pop films is ignored by Talbot, though there is a scattered literature on the subject from both sides, first-person writing by Hollywood film-makers and sociological studies of audiences.

FILM: BOOK 1[4] is sub-titled *The Audience and the Film-maker*, but we are not approached by scientific methods of survey and analysis, only by sentiment and rhetoric. Audience research would trespass on the dirty precincts of the box office. Nor are there any introspective records by gifted film-goers, about their feelings in the cinema. The basic assumption of the editor, Robert Hughes, is that there are, scattered round the world, honest film-makers, such as J. A. Bardem in Spain, Carl Dreyer in Denmark, and Satyajit Ray in India, and that there is, scattered round the world, an audience of sincere people waiting for their messages. The communion of these men and this audience is, of course, violated by commerce. Repeatedly the contributors to *Film: Book 1*, many of them directors, reveal fear and hostility when the business and technological aspects of movie production are mentioned (summed up in the dirty word "Hollywood"). They have a compensatory dream of the autonomy of creation natural to an easel painter or a poet. The idea is that creative work, independent of business or too many machines, will spontaneously win a sympathetic response from the pure in heart, whatever colour their skin. Shadows fall on this ideal of communication because audiences keep going to the wrong films. Is the audience passively accepting trash or is the audience itself corrupt?

Neo-realists and their commentators are always engaged with the problem of the degree of the public's guilt or innocence: either the corruption is engendered by Hollywood (in which case people are stupid to put up with it), or it is a mirror of themselves (in which case they are no better than the Organisation Men who have replaced the Monsters of Capitalism in liberal folk-lore). The culpability of the audience is the assumption underlying much of the anti-Hollywood opinion of *Film: Book 1*.

The editor, in a revealing bit of nonsense, writes about "the epidemic of paralysis of the optic nerve which is one of the results of the steadily decreasing visual vitality in wide-screen and TV films." Imaginary maladies of this kind are often projected on to the communications revolution which has created a new visual culture (fashion, styling, picture journalism, as well as movies and TV). Almost to a man, Hughes' contributors minimise the cinema as a technological art form with a mass audience. Jean Renoir states: "all technical refinements discourage me," but would he really like to use Edison's original camera and, if not, which refinement of technique would he draw the line at? Bjarne Henning-Jensen compares wide-screen films of long duration to American cars, with the complacent assumption that honest and unspoiled people are not so foolish as to take American technology and styling seriously. Both film critics and the film-makers whose statements Hughes has collected are hard after prestigeful literary and artistic contacts. Carl Dreyer records his hope that films "may be lifted to the same artistic level as the most outstanding theatre performances." Writing about Robert Flaherty, Charles Siepmann evokes, on one panting page, to explain "Bob the man," A. N. Whitehead, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and William Blake. The unsuitability of yoking the antithetical Reynolds and Blake together is, bluntly, typical of the level of literary and artistic knowledge film critics usually reveal. Jonas Mekas, editor of *Film Culture* (New York), defends avant-garde movies of the '50s as "sometimes trite, unorganised gushings, spillings-out—as all personal poetry in a way seems to be." What *has* Mekas been reading?

BEFORE THE WAR, popular acceptance of the cinema was rather like TV in the '50s: audiences accepted the medium itself, rather than exercised a high level of choice. Now the cinema is in a phase of product differentiation, with more selective and more self-aware audiences than before. There are not merely antithetical neo-realist films versus Hollywood (or "Free Cinema" versus Rank). Hollywood's output can be divided more extensively than before into specialised categories (teen-age, woman's, family, horror, etc.). Supporters of neo-realism and related tendencies (which are world-wide) are not willing to see their films as part of a general process of differentiation natural to the age of the medium and to the state of the economy. On the contrary, contributors to *Film: Book 1*, typical of a considerable body of writers, have pretensions to provide a unified theory of cinema. They attribute to their own kind of films sole, ultimate worth. Federico Fellini says that "neo-realism means looking at reality with an honest eye—but any reality; not just social reality." As a record of Fellini's ideas such a statement might have its usefulness in interpreting *I Vitelloni* or *La Strada*. His words, however, like those of other neo-realists, lack the precision and rigour necessary for extended use. Perhaps only in film criticism would it be

[4] *Film: Book 1, The Audience and the Film-maker*. Edited by ROBERT HUGHES. (Grove Press, New York.)

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

possible to assume that capacious O.K. words like "honesty" and "reality" provide a general critical standard. A unified theory of cinema (though badly needed) will not be made by acts of exclusion on the basis of a sloganised vocabulary which prescribes the conditions and forms that reality can take.

EDGAR MORIN's *The Stars*,[5] which touches on aspects of the star system from Zukor's Famous Players to James Dean, is refreshing after Talbot's and Hughes' books. At least here is a writer who does not deny the status of the movies as a mass medium. He has, in fact, a positive appetite for making connections between the images on the screen and the technology and economy which made them possible. Profuse meanings are made to shower from the pop film, in contrast to the usual charges of emptiness.

Unfortunately, Morin uses his sense of the nature of the movies simply as a framework for an undisciplined excursion into sexual and mythological reverie. He compares stars to patron saints, love goddesses, merchandise, statues, and absences to be filled by the trade in fetishistic substitutes. Female stars are discussed as inheritors of the iconography of virgins, chance partners, and fatal women, which runs through French poetry and pop art since the 19th century. Stars become receptacles which carry whatever occurs to Morin in his high-temperature, short-winded essays. He mentions, but does not know what to do with, the chastity and propriety of many fans' attitude towards their choice. He is impatient of film experiences that lead away from the physique of the stars or away from an identification of the screen as a bedroom's fourth wall. Morin's French viewpoint comes out not only in his trigger-happy eroticism but in his treatment of the star system itself. He gives equal emphasis to both Joan Crawford and Luis Mariano, which is historically absurd. His account of the leisure of the star, though it begins with a good idea of the "public-private" nature of the star's relaxation, is worked out too much in terms of Leo Rosten updated by *Cinémonde*, a French film magazine that haunts the beaches. The fact is Morin's book is only of local interest, geared to the special tastes of Paris intellectuals and French fandom:

> Marlon Brando, roaring archangel, like an imaginary John the Baptist heralded the real James Dean. . . .

Such Cocteau-esque reactions are not really exportable. Despite scattered insights on some of the kicks of film-going, Morin's book is an exotic growth on a vernacular art form.

WHAT WE NEED, and neither Talbot's respectability nor Morin's ardour provide it, is an approach to a descriptive criticism of the film, one which does not set out to exclude the popular movie. Most film critics, as Talbot's and Hughes' samples show, are making premature evaluation of pop films before it has been shown how they really work, either in the minds of audiences or in relation to the communications revolution of which they are a part. Few critics reveal the slightest interest in the cinema's specific kind of communication (high impact, strong participation, hard to remember), or in the technology and organisation through which movies reach us. The desire for art status, such a strong subjective factor in film criticism, seems mainly promotional and ideal, for the connections that can be found (Baudelaire's modernity, Wagner's totalwork) are neglected, presumably because the investigation of these analogies would require research and analysis.

There is a new problem facing critics who are now starting to approach pop movies seriously, which arises from their dependence on the idea of individual authorship. Detailed analysis of the work of pop directors who work within the commercial framework has certainly revealed some recurring factors which are, correctly, translatable into a personal style. However, such nuanced discrimination risks being more like the esoteric expertise of specialists than like the humanist's tribute to individuality. Science fiction, for instance, has a body of expert opinion which is authoritative within the field, but unknown and unusable outside it. Detective stories have connoisseurs who, like Anthony Boucher, can praise Michael Innes for his Henry Jamesian subtlety. Now that is fine, inside the field; the other specialists get the point, and it makes sense if decoded properly. Girlie magazine fanatics can tell one model from another and compare one costume, or lack of it, with another. The risk for film criticism is that the canon of individual authorship, applied to an expendable art form, will simply lead to the insulation of criticism within a kind of hobbies-corner specialism. Then the criticism of pop films might become technical and esoteric, like the cult of Hi Fi, or like surfing in the United States.

In point of fact, what is needed is a criticism of movies as a pop art which can have a critical currency beyond that of footnotes and preposterous learning.

[5] *The Stars*. By EDGAR MORIN. (Grove Press, New York.)

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# NOTES & TOPICS

## Cross Channel

IT'S HARD to judge from a distance whether Britain, as Lord Gladwyn says, "remains in a state of dazed resentment" since the rupture of her negotiations to join the Common Market. I suspect not. But his implied question is crucial: what now should be Britain's political strategy in Europe and in the western alliance?

Many Europeans, I think, would agree an "Atlantic Community" is hardly feasible, if the term means something similar to the quasi-federal European Community. Would the American Congress accept the possibility of America's being out-voted by other members of such a "Community," and having to apply the very measures which she had opposed? This is already difficult enough among States that are comparative equals: it becomes still more difficult between one giant and a number of comparative dwarfs. Hence the attractiveness of the "Atlantic Partnership" proposed by the late President Kennedy—the so-called "dumb-bell concept" of two linked entities, each distinct but each bound to the other by closer ties than those of a traditional alliance.

No single European country—not Britain, not France—is big enough to form the European end of such a dumb-bell. Partnership can only endure between powers of the same order of magnitude. Even "special relationships" based on language, history, or even common interest, have a way of becoming difficult at times if one party is big enough to be tempted to impose its will, and the other small enough to feel uneasy. Hence one of the advantages of political union in Europe—to attain the same order of magnitude as the United States and thus be able to become her partner.

If this correctly states Lord Gladwyn's argument, it seems to me very good sense. There would also, as he says, be "real sense" in the proposed multilateral nuclear force if it enabled a European component in joint nuclear defence to be put at the disposal of an eventual European political authority. As I understand it, the American Government by no means rules out such a possibility.

Where then does Britain come in? A clear stand by her on these lines—if necessary after the election—would help to keep open the "European option" which seemed to have been closed when the Common Market negotiations were broken off. In itself, it might contribute to the gradual preparation of a new state of affairs in which membership of a European political union could once more become feasible. And more immediately, it would help to reinforce the "Community" concept of a federally united Europe in close partnership with America—as distinguished from the so-called "Gaullist" concept of a looser European confederation, possibly dominated by one of its members, and perhaps less firmly committed to Atlantic partnership.

For all these reasons, I think, Lord Gladwyn's contribution to the debate is worth pondering, and with much of what he says it's hard to disagree. But *patti chiari, amicizia lunga*; before we shake on it, let's be sure we know what we mean. And in two particular respects, I'm not sure that I share Lord Gladwyn's assumptions about the kind of "Europe" he ultimately seeks.

First, to "co-ordinate and possibly even amalgamate" British and French nuclear forces, he proposes an "Executive Committee" of "the four larger powers" with *co-opted* representatives of the small ones. This may be realistic: but even with an independent Commission in the background, it seems to smack of hegemony.

Secondly, Lord Gladwyn doesn't seem to like what many Europeans regard as the only alternative to such inter-governmental arrangements with their built-in dangers of either hegemony, owing to inequality, or unwieldiness, owing to the rule of unanimity: that is, patient and practical steps towards federal organisation. Federal union, he tells us, is "repugnant to the great majority of the British"—although in foreign affairs they accept increasing restrictions on national "sovereignty" and in home affairs they've lived for years with a quasi-federal educational system and a quasi-federal organisation of the police.

Warning us against the danger of establishing direct elections to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, Lord Gladwyn, unlike most Europeans, doesn't object that they're premature: he seems to believe that the whole idea is a thing of the past. "After all," he says, "theories which may have made sense when Europe was in a state of collapse are not necessarily applicable when individual nations have recovered their confidence and their prosperity." Reasonable, perhaps: but it's disconcerting to hear from an English "European" what one's so often heard from Continental "Gaullists." I still don't see how they or he can answer the $64 billion question—could anything *short of* a federal Europe become what Lord Gladwyn calls the "politico-economic . . . equivalent of America" in the vital field of nuclear defence?

*Richard Mayne*



PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*International Commentary*

# Fidel Castro's Dilemma

## *Letter from Cuba—By* ERNST HALPERIN

ALMOST every day and all day long, out at sea beyond the three-mile limit, citizens of Havana may observe the apparently immobile turrets of at least one American warship. To them this is just one of many constant reminders that Cuba today is still a citadel besieged. And it is not easy to get into the besieged fortress. There is only one route of access left from the American continent, the Cubana Airlines flight from Mexico City. Officially two flights are scheduled per week, but in practice there is rarely more than one flight in ten days. For Cubana's fleet of overseas airplanes is reduced to two Britannia prop-jets, and these also have to service the Havana–Gander–Prague route (once weekly) and numerous special flights for government officials, distinguished guests, sports teams, and delegations.

On its Havana–Mexico City flight the big Britannia is usually filled to capacity with Cubans who after months or even years of bureaucratic procedures have managed to obtain their emigration papers and foreign visas. On the return trip to Havana the Britannia usually does not carry more than a dozen or so passengers. The reason is not only that all passengers to Havana are carefully screened and photographed by the Mexican security authorities but also that the Mexican consulate in Havana does not supply Latin Americans (or North Americans for that matter) with the transit documents which would enable them to get off the airplane on their return to Mexico.

To all intents and purposes Mexican security measures block the flow of tourists and prevent any mass pilgrimage of enthusiasts from the American continent to Cuba. Non-diplomatic travel to Cuba is thus effectively restricted to businessmen, a few reporters, and those invited guests for whom the Cuban government is willing to pay for the long trip via Europe and back. Such guests from Latin America and other parts of the world are usually funnelled through Prague. West Europeans can also use the weekly Iberia service from Madrid, and as a third possibility there is the very long Moscow–Havana non-stop trip by Soviet prop-jet.

Irksome though they are, these travel restrictions are a very minor nuisance compared to the effects of the trade embargo imposed by the U.S. government. There is still some trade with Latin America, but the bulk of Cuba's supplies now has to be shipped from East European and even Asian ports by sea routes that are ten times longer than Cuba's old supply line from the U.S.A. To ship the same quantity of goods would therefore take ten times more cargo-space than previously, and of course this new capacity is not available. Quite apart from this, Cuba's new Communist trading partners are simply not equipped to supply her with the machinery and consumer goods which she formerly acquired from the U.S. All the Communist states can do is provide the basic foodstuffs needed to keep the Cuban population alive, a limited amount of raw materials for Cuba's industries, and some industrial equipment which so far has proved to be of doubtful value. Most of the spare parts needed to keep Cuban industry's American-built machinery going, and such items as the chemicals for the vitally important air-conditioning plants, cannot be produced either locally or in East Europe; they have to be acquired in Canada or West Europe and brought to Cuba through devious channels and at great expense.

To these difficulties must be added the inevitable effects of the mass emigration of personnel with managerial and technical skills and the hurried reorganisation of the economic system—the switch from private to public ownership in industry and wholesale trade, and from a competitive market economy to centralised planning. And further problems have been created in turn by the planners themselves.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In one of the astonishingly blunt and honest statements so typical of the man, the Cuban Minister of Industries, Ernesto Guevara, has recently admitted to two very serious mistakes which, as he himself put it, are typical of beginners unacquainted with the basic elements of economic theory and practice.[1]

The first of these mistakes, according to Guevara, was the decision to implement a programme of diversification of agricultural production at the expense of the area planted in sugar cane. Guevara frankly admitted that the sugar cane area was reduced for no other reason than that sugar appeared to the Cuban planners as "the symbol of colonialism and imperialist exploitation." This decision was at least partially responsible for the spectacular decline of Cuban sugar production from the customary 5–6 million tons to a meagre 3 million tons or less (with the resultant decline in exports and foreign currency income). The area under cane is now again to be increased to its former size even though this means that the Cuban planners have had to give up or postpone to a distant future their plans for making Cuba self-sufficient in rice and cotton.

The second mistake described by Guevara was the erection of new factories without regard to the country's raw material base, with the result that in many cases it costs almost as much to import the raw materials needed to feed these plants as it would have cost to import the finished product. As Guevara himself has bluntly put it, two whole years of industrialisation have been wasted through this costly error. The entire industrialisation programme is now being changed. From now on industrialisation will be based on Cuba's own natural resources, principally sugar and animal products. The ambitious plans for the development of a Cuban steel industry have apparently been shelved. The project for a big steel mill, the construction of which had several times been announced as imminent, is now in Guevara's words only "being studied."

In view of all these problems it is not surprising that living conditions should be difficult in Cuba, but rather that everyday life continues at a normal pace. Indeed, my own feeling on returning to Havana after an absence of two years is one of astonishment that things should still be going on as they are, that there are still buses and private cars in the streets, that the streets are still being cleaned, that the people in them still look reasonably well-fed and clothed, and that the whole city still gives one the impression of being on a higher level of economic development and general well-being than most cities in Latin America. It is only gradually that one begins to notice such things as the deterioration of the formerly excellent urban transportation system and other public services, the breakdown of the water supply in large parts of the city, the bumps and cracks in the pavements where water mains have burst, the smell of gas from broken pipes, and the empty shelves in shops and supermarkets.

All articles of clothing are rationed. The ration book for male adults lists shoes, socks, undershirts, undershorts, shirts, trousers, sweaters, handkerchiefs, pyjamas, and one suit-length of cloth per year; the book for female adults includes such items as brassieres, girdles, and aprons. Pails and other kitchen hardware are also rationed. Before the hurricane hit Cuba in October, the monthly food ration comprised one-eighth of one pound of butter, five eggs, one pound of chicken, three pounds of meat, six pounds of rice, six cans of condensed milk, twelve ounces of coffee, eight pounds of potatoes, and two pounds of lard per person. Fresh milk was provided only for children and old people; vegetables and meat were portioned out as available to owners of ration cards. There was also one piece of washing soap and one piece of toilet soap per month. The distribution of these rations varied from district to district, and in many cases arrears of several months in specific commodities piled up and were annulled at the end of the yearly rationing period.

After the hurricane, the rations were substantially reduced, and rationing of sugar newly introduced (four pounds per month and person in Havana, and five pounds in the eastern provinces). I must note that at the time of writing, bread is still not rationed, and that although there are numerous cases of malnutrition owing to vitamin and protein deficiencies, there is still no real starvation in Cuba to-day.

Since such staple foods as bread, rice, beans, and lard are either entirely or largely imported, it is certainly not the efforts of Cuban agriculture that are keeping the Cuban people alive. Statistical evidence of a decline is available only for sugar, but the unbelievable scarcity of meat, eggs, vegetables, and fruit is sufficient proof that production is down in these also. The obvious reason for the decline is that the low price-level fixed by the government has completely stifled incentive. But the real reason lies deeper; the low price-level for agricultural products is just the expression of the fact that there are not enough consumer goods to go around. Since all essentials are rationed, a general increase in agricultural prices, or the institution of a Soviet-type free market for surplus products,

[1] See the Havana newspapers *Hoy* and *Revolución*, August 24th, 1963.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would not enable the peasants to buy more goods for their money but would only precipitate the inflation which the government has so far managed to stave off.

This extreme austerity naturally causes widespread discontent and bitterness which is further inflamed by the foolish claims of government propaganda that the general living standard has risen and that shortages are due to an increase in purchasing power. In reality the bulk of the population is certainly worse off, and life for them is far more difficult than before the revolution.

If the success of a revolution were to be measured by the extent to which it increases the material well-being of the people, the Cuban Revolution would have to be judged a miserable failure. This is indeed the standard by which the average unsophisticated citizen evaluates a revolution. But by the same criterion all great revolutions, even the American Revolution, would be failures since they have all brought prolonged periods of hardship in their wake. Actually only revolutions that fail, *e.g.*, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, are apt to bring immediate material benefits to the masses by inducing the frightened rulers to grant concessions in order to avoid a recurrence of the outbreak.

A revolution is primarily a breakdown of state authority which may result from the most varied material or psychological causes. The so-called success of a revolution is determined by the extent to which it leads to the replacement of the old rulers by a new ruling group and to radical social and political changes induced or enforced by this group in its struggle to establish and consolidate itself in power. Any revolution which leads to the establishment of a completely new ruling group, and to sweeping social and political changes, can be termed successful. By this standard, and it may be the only historically valid one, the Cuban revolution so far has certainly been a success.

CUBA TO-DAY is very definitely a totalitarian Communist dictatorship, yet paradoxically it is not ruled by the Communist Party. In the summer and fall of 1961 the transition of the Cuban régime to a Communist Party dictatorship of the orthodox Soviet-bloc type seemed imminent. At that time such Old Guard Communists as Party Secretary Blas Roca, Union chief Lázaro Peña, and Aníbal Escalante appeared to enjoy a status of equality or near equality with Fidel Castro's closest collaborators, Raúl Castro and Ernesto Guevara. Communist Assistant Ministers appeared to be in effective control of nearly all the ministries.[2] And from top to bottom Old Guard Communists were in charge of organising and indoctrinating the new Marxist-Leninist ruling party that was being set up under the provisional name of ORI (*Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas*). The new party, it appeared, was going to be nothing but an expansion of the old Communist Party of Cuba, the *Partido Socialista Popular* (PSP), with the old PSP as its hard core.

At that time the official legend of the Cuban Revolution claimed that Castroites and Communists had jointly fought and toppled the Batista dictatorship. The fact that the Communist Party had been reluctant to break with Batista and had established relations with Castro only when his victory had become inevitable was glossed over. Communist non-participation in the general strike proclaimed by Castro in April, 1958, was blamed on a Castroite resistance leader who had fallen from grace, Faustino Pérez, who, it was claimed, had deliberately neglected to make contact with the Communists.

How much conditions have changed since then can be seen by the following public statement recently made by "Ché" Guevara.

> In Cuba the Communist Party did not lead the revolution, but its influence made itself felt, and its participation was [sic] important in the present socialist stage. In Cuba the Communist Party did not see clearly; it did not properly understand the methods of struggle; it erred in its estimation of the movement's chances of success. Here this extremely serious (*gravísimo*) mistake was not costly because we had Fidel and a group of real revolutionaries. In other countries such a mistake can be very costly. It can lead the revolution astray. (*Revolución*, August 24th, 1963.)

THAT SUCH A STATEMENT should be publicly made and published by the Cuban press (including Blas Roca's own newspaper, the former Communist Party organ *Hoy*) obviously denotes a serious decline in the status and influence of the Communist Old Guard. I found this borne out by a study of Cuban press and radio pronouncements. Blas Roca is a member of the Party Directorate and Editor-in-Chief of *Hoy*, but he is no longer referred to as "a distinguished revolutionary leader," nor is he shown side-by-side with Castro in pictures of meetings and celebrations. Lázaro Peña is still the head of the trade union federation, but during my month's stay in Cuba I did not once come across his name in radio broadcasts or the press. Carlos Rafael Rodríguez is burdened with the impossible task of straightening out Cuba's agriculture. Apart from this he no longer appears to

[2] The significant exceptions were Raúl Castro's Defence Ministry and Ramiro Valdes' Ministry of the Interior.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

play any political role, and according to informed sources his position is none too secure. Fabio Grobart, once in charge of cadre indoctrination, is a member of the editorial board of the party's ideological publication, the monthly *Cuba Socialista*. Another prominent Old Guard Communist, the writer Juan Marinello, made the mistake of publicly acclaiming the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. He has since been removed from his influential position as Rector of Havana University and sent to Paris as ambassador to UNESCO—an appointment that can only be classified as an honourable form of banishment.

Old Guard Communists are rarely if ever seen in Castro's company nowadays, and none of them appears to belong to his inner decision-making circle. On the other hand a number of men who two years ago were definitely out of favour, like Faustino Pérez, or relegated to positions of little importance, like Pedro Miret, are frequently seen with Castro, and have their names and pictures displayed in the newspapers. Army leaders such as Efigenio Almejeiras, Sergio del Valle, and William Gálvez (old guerrilla fighters all) are also far more in evidence than they used to be. In personnel, if not in spirit, the Castro régime is certainly less Communist than two years ago.

A very definite moment can be fixed as the turning-point in the fortunes of the Communist Old Guard: the stormy session of the Party Directorate on March 26th, 1962, when Castro turned against the Old Guard machine-politician Aníbal Escalante and fired him from his job as national organiser. From that moment on, old non-Communist Castroites, who had been elbowed off the stage by Old Guard party men, began drifting back into prominence. Communist influence in the ministries declined. The whole party machinery of ORI (or PURS—*Partido Unido de la Revolución Socialista*, as it now began to be called) was overhauled in what amounted to a gigantic purge. In effect the members of the new party had been handpicked by the cadres of the old Communist Party (PSP). The system of recruitment was now drastically changed. Since then party members have been picked from among the shock workers of the factories and offices, and the final decision as to their membership is now made by open vote in a workers' meeting. In practice this amounts to a radical purge of the party membership. Thus (according to a report in the July issue of *Cuba Socialista*), in a certain party organisation in Oriente Province only 30 of the 180 original ORI members were admitted to PURS.

This method of picking the party membership is necessarily slow, and since the new party is still in its formative stage, it cannot yet function as an effective totalitarian instrument of supervision and control. To-day this function is still performed by the old "Committees for the Defence of the Revolution," which function in every street and enterprise. As these Committees are now closely linked with the Political Police, or G2, their effectiveness is far greater than two years ago. Terrorism and other subversive activities, which were still rampant all through 1961, have been eliminated. Active opponents of the régime are easily ferreted out and sent to labour camps, to prison, or even to the execution wall. As a result Cuba is a far quieter and at least superficially more orderly place than at the time of my last visit (May–August, 1961). There is a notable decline in enthusiasm—one no longer finds shop-girls humming the *Internationale*—but the régime seems stable and the prospect of any mass rising very remote.

ANOTHER VERY NOTICEABLE change is the decline in the importance of the militia. Guard duty for the militia has become an everyday chore performed without enthusiasm and as a matter of course. Off duty, militia-men and women no longer wear their uniforms, nor do they carry guns. Thus Cuba to-day no longer gives the impression of a nation in arms. On the other hand the army, which was very much in the background in 1961, has regained prominence, and if the scheme for compulsory service announced by Castro in his university speech on the 26th of July is actually implemented, the importance and power of the army chieftains will of course be still further increased. These men are old guerrilla fighters, non-Communists, and devoted Castroites all. Their rise in stature is symptomatic.

The Old Guard Communists still maintain their foothold in the ministries. The trade union bureaucracy and the editorial offices of *Hoy* and one or two other publications are Communist strongholds, and there are Communists in the Directorate of the new party. Through channels such as these the Old Guard Communists undoubtedly continue to exert considerable influence. But Castro no longer seems to follow or even ask their advice in making major policy decisions. They are not part of his entourage, do not "belong to his crowd." This is made up of former guerrilla and urban resistance movement fighters and a sprinkling of older non-Communist specialists and technicians, such as Foreign Minister Raúl Roa and Economics Minister Regino Boti.

Yet it would be a serious error to assume that the decline of the Communist Old Guard and the resurgence of the non-Communist Castroite element spells anything like a switch to more moderate domestic or international policies. The Old Guard Communists were never

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the firebrands, the most radical wing of the Cuban Revolution. They were not those who pressed for ever more and quicker socialisation. A comparative study of the party-line *Hoy* with Carlos Franqui's non-party *Revolución* suggests that in crucial periods of the revolution *Hoy* took a more moderate line both in internal and foreign policy.

The Old Guard Communists are practical politicians of long experience, and however distorted their picture of the world may be, they do at least have a working knowledge of international (and particularly Soviet) policy. Above all, these men are certainly amenable to Soviet counsels of moderation. Castro's non-party supporters are not. The older men among them may offer technical advice on matters pertaining to their own field of interest, but none of them appears to have sufficient stature to hold, advocate, and defend a global political concept, a consistent political line of his own. These men are route companions who have hitherto obediently followed, even though with trepidation, any path that their leader has picked out for them.

As for the young veterans of the guerrilla war and the resistance movement, many of them are undoubtedly more and not less radical and anti-American than even the most hardened Old Guard Communist. The educational background and the total lack of political experience of these people does not permit the assumption that any of them might have a clear and sensible picture of the state of world affairs that might be put against Castro's and Guevara's glowing vision of a revolutionary millenium in Latin America.

FIDEL CASTRO'S last 26th of July anniversary speech was largely a lecture addressed to the Communist parties of Latin America, a lecture on their duty as revolutionaries to follow the Cuban example in launching armed insurrection:[3]

> What happened in Cuba was by no means a miracle. Exactly the same thing may happen in many Latin American countries. Everything that was done in Cuba, and even more, may also be done in many other countries of Latin America. It would not make much sense for us Cubans to celebrate this anniversary with so much joy and revolutionary enthusiasm if this anniversary did not spell a lesson, a useful lesson, for dozens and dozens of millions of brothers in Latin America....
>
> And in many Latin American countries conditions for revolution are incomparably better than those that prevailed in our country. There are countries in Latin America, despoiled and squeezed dry by the monopolies and oligarchies, where desperate starving masses are waiting for the breach through which to erupt into history. And it is the duty of the revolutionaries to open this breach. The duty of the revolutionaries is not only the study of theory. The duty of the revolutionaries does not consist in filling their heads with revolutionary theory and forgetting the practical necessity for revolution. The duty of the revolutionaries consists not only in absorbing and knowing and feeling a conviction and a way of life, but in comprehending a road, a tactic, a strategy which will lead to the triumph of these ideas. This is the duty of the revolutionaries, and not to wait until the Greek calends for this road to open itself of its own and the régime of the exploiters to disappear through some miracle....

There is a story behind these words. They are not mere rhetoric but a very definite expression of discontent with the policies of the Latin American Communist movement. In his Second Declaration of Havana (issued in the fall of 1961), Castro had called on the "revolutionaries" of Latin America, *i.e.*, the Communist parties, to rise in arms to destroy the régimes of the oligarchy and break the stranglehold of imperialism. In a speech on January 16th, 1963, he bitterly complained that "some" brother parties had quietly shelved the Declaration of Havana instead of implementing it. In point of fact, in all of Latin America only one Communist party, the Venezuelan, had followed Castro's call. The others calmly continued with their previous non-violent policies. Furthermore the elimination of Aníbal Escalante from the Cuban leadership in the spring of 1962 had led to an estrangement between Castro and the leading figures of Latin American Communism. By the beginning of 1963 things had come to such a pass that the Latin American party leaderships were denigrating Castroite personalities and groups in their own countries as "Trotskyites," "adventurers," and "leftist sectarians," and denouncing the Castroite advocacy of guerrilla warfare as a manifestation of "petty-bourgeois opportunism;" all this while outwardly still proclaiming their devotion to and unconditional support for Cuba.

Recently the situation has become still worse from Castro's viewpoint since the Latin American Communist movement—in accordance with the Soviet-American *détente*—is swinging still further right. Two Latin American Communist parties, in Peru and Argentina, are now proclaiming tolerance of (or even qualified support for) the Presidents of their countries even though these are moderate politicians prepared to cooperate with the Alliance for Progress. In his 26th of July speech Castro made it quite clear that he does not agree with this new Communist

[3] *Hoy*, *Revolución*, and *El Mundo*, July 27th, 1963.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

policy of extreme moderation. Speaking of Argentina and Peru, he declared:

> Every day we had news of some military coup in Argentina, a military rising, a garrison up-in-arms, of coups and counter-coups and more coups and counter-coups. What did they do in order to escape from this predicament? Phony elections, with the leftist forces excluded, the *Peronista* movement, which has a majority in that country, excluded, the Communist Party and the other organisations excluded. That is the representative democracy envisaged by the Yankees, elections of a type in which the majority of the people may not vote and may not pronounce itself for a candidate, and so a "Mr. Nobody" was elected President by a minority, a man without any freedom of action, in the shadow of the army barracks and of Yankee imperialism....
>
> Elections were also held a year ago in Peru, and since the *Gorilas*[4] did not agree with the result, they engineered a coup. After one year they again staged elections, and the winner was a candidate acceptable to the *Gorilas* and to imperialism, and consequently they allowed him to assume office. But let him decide on one single reform, and they will depose him within three days. Let them make an agrarian reform on the Cuban pattern, and we shall see how long any one of these puppet governments remains in power....

It is indicative of the state of relations between Castro and the Communist parties of Latin America that although several hundred guests from Latin American countries attended the meeting at which Castro spoke these words, not one of them was a Communist Party or Popular Front representative of any standing.

Some weeks later "Ché" Guevara, speaking to a group of young Latin Americans, repeated Castro's admonition to the Communist parties. In a passage I have already quoted he first reminded his listeners of the "most serious" mistake the Cuban Communists had made in not participating in the armed rising, and then pointed out: "In other countries such a mistake can be very costly, it can lead the revolution astray."

In his book, *Guerrilla Warfare* (1960), Guevara first propounded his highly unorthodox doctrine of induced revolution: "It is not necessary to wait until all conditions for making revolution exist; the insurrection can create them."

In a statement made to a group of North American students (August 1st, 1963) Guevara reiterated and amplified this doctrine:

> In every undeveloped country there is a class more bereft of possessions than any other, and this is not the industrial worker. It is the agricultural labourer, the peasant, the serf of the glebe in Latin America. This is the greatest revolutionary ferment. These are people who have nothing to lose but their chains. But they have no consciousness, no political development, and it is up to the most progressive of the progressive classes to lead the struggle.
>
> How can these peasants be made to understand the necessity of the struggle? They cannot read, they have no radio. But if there is a guerrilla troop in their neighbourhood, they understand its language. When the guerrillas kill those who oppress and mistreat them, then they understand. Then the peasant joins the guerrilla band, increases its strength, its class character becomes clear, and it achieves power. The role of the armed struggle, of the liberation war, is that of the catalyst.... (*El Mundo*, August 3rd, 1963.)

This is the perspective from which the Castro régime views its international policy: revolution in Latin America—revolution which will raise the siege of Cuba, free her from her isolation, and promote Dr. Castro from the rank of Caribbean chieftain to that of military and political leader of a continent. In this sense Cuba's foreign policy is still in the same stage as that of the Bolsheviks in the very first years after their coming to power in the Soviet Union. It is not based on an acceptance of the situation prevailing in the geographical area in which the country is situated, but in the expectation of drastic and violent change in that situation. Once the Bolsheviks had given up their hope that "world revolution" was imminent, they left revolutionary antics to the Comintern and settled down to a sober and realistic policy of seeking ties with whatever non-Communist country was willing to deal with them. The Cubans have not yet made this clear separation between revolutionary expectations and practical foreign policy based on an acceptance of the world as it is.

Possibly Castro is now approaching this stage. I had the feeling that one interesting passage in his 26th of July speech hinted at a subtle change in his evaluation of the Latin American scene:

> But what has happened in Latin America since the Bay of Pigs invasion shows that those statesmen and governments which have taken an independent attitude, an attitude of respect for Cuban sovereignty, and who have not been instruments of Yankee imperialism in its aggressions against Cuba, are the most stable governments in Latin America. And thus we see that the government of Mexico is a stable government, and we see that Goulart's government could not be deposed by Brazilian reaction. And there have been no coups in Chile, and no coups and take-overs in Bolivia, and no coups and take-overs in Uruguay....

[4] A Latin American term for high-ranking military officers.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This was the first time in more than two years that Castro had shown himself willing to differentiate between Latin American governments according to their attitude towards Cuba, a first sign that he recognised the need for governmental friends. But it did not mean that he had given up his hopes of spreading the revolution to the Latin American mainland.

The all-out propaganda campaign against the democratic government of Venezuela and the demonstrations of solidarity with the anti-Betancourt guerrillas and terrorists continued. It would be naïve indeed to assume that Cuban support for the Venezuelan revolutionaries is merely platonic. A cache of over three tons of arms destined for these rebels was found on the Venezuelan coast in November. Some of the rifles have been traced to a Belgian factory which sold them to the Cuban government in 1959. (The Cubans point out that most of the arms in the cache are "of American make," and that they do not receive American arms. But this defence is flimsy, for it is well known, and the Cubans themselves never fail to mention it in their indictment of the U.S., that the pre-revolutionary Batista government received large quantities of American arms. It is naturally these older stocks, and not the newer Czech and Soviet weapons, which would be shipped to guerrillas in other Latin American countries.)

The Venezuelan Communists and Castroites, united in a clandestine "National Liberation Front," had vowed to prevent the Presidential elections of December 1st from being held. When it became apparent that their guerrilla and terrorist organisation (the FALN, or "Forces of National Liberation") was not strong enough to achieve this, they called on their supporters to abstain from voting. But on election day, over ninety per cent of the electorate went to the polls. A large majority voted either for the two government candidates or for a candidate to the right of them.

Seven days later, Castro was still ranting against Venezuela's President Betancourt, "a bloodthirsty, miserable traitor to his country who has sold his soul to the Yankee monopolies," and against the Venezuelan "electoral farce based on bloodshed and terror." Possibly he really believes this. (In exactly the same way, the German Communists once talked themselves into believing that the Weimar Democracy was a bloodthirsty dictatorship, and that the German Social Democrats were "Social Fascists.")

The Venezuelan election was a crushing blow to Castroism. It proved that a democratic régime is not vulnerable to the Ché Guevara's method of using guerrilla and terrorist bands as "catalysts" to induce a revolution. The Castroites themselves once knew this very well. In the same book on *Guerrilla Warfare*—in which Guevara declared that "it is not necessary to wait until all conditions for making the revolution exist; the insurrection can create them"—he also wrote:

> Where a government has come to power through some form of popular vote, fraudulent or not, and maintains at least an appearance of constitutional legality, the guerrilla outbreak cannot be promoted, since the possibilities of peaceful struggle have not yet been exhausted. . . .

Castro and Guevara conveniently forgot this when in 1961 and 1962 the upsurge of Castroism in Venezuela gave them hopes that the Betancourt government might after all be toppled by force. Will they not have to remember it again, and liquidate their foolish Venezuelan venture, if they ever want to establish a *modus vivendi* with the community of Latin American states?

CUBA'S FOREIGN POLICY to-day is still based on the expectation of revolution in other Latin American countries; but even if a Communist take-over should succeed in some such country as, say, Venezuela, the revolutionary government could maintain itself in power only if it were backed by the Soviet Union in the same manner as the Cuban Revolution has been backed since 1960.

Castro's programme of revolution in Latin America thus hinges upon Soviet economic and military aid. Would such aid be forthcoming? Castro is apparently convinced that it would be: "We know by experience and conviction that every nation acting in the same manner as the Cuban people have acted will receive the unequivocal support of the Soviet Union and the entire Socialist camp." This conviction evidently stems from the belief that the Soviet Union's support for Castro is motivated by its desire to further the cause of world revolution. The picture of the world is that of the 1960 Moscow Declaration of Communist and Workers' Parties: a world in the stage of violent transition from imperialistic capitalism to socialism, with the victorious forces of socialism already having attained superiority, and their imperialistic opponents in the throes of a deep and final crisis.

But what if the Soviet Union is not really engaged in a world-wide battle to end the "exploitation of man by man," but rather in an old-fashioned struggle against another big power at whose expense it is trying to expand its sphere of influence? What if at a certain stage of this struggle the Soviet leaders are forced to the conclusion that they have over-extended their lines and will have to retrench? What if this retrenchment should entail some sort of an

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

arrangement, however temporary, with the United States? What if the price for this would be Soviet withdrawal from Latin America? How would all this fit into Castro's picture of the world?

And such a development has now become a very real possibility. Indeed, the Communist movements in some South American countries, much to Castro's anger and dismay, are already adjusting their policies to this possibility by moving to positions of neutrality or qualified support of men like Belaúnde of Peru and Illia of Argentina, moderate leaders who have pronounced themselves in favour of the Alliance for Progress.

Castro at first seemed willing to make some gestures of moderation in response to the new situation. Even before his voyage to the Soviet Union he found kind words for President Kennedy and expressed a desire for negotiations with the United States Government. On his return from Moscow he even announced his government's willingness to pay compensation for nationalised American property.

But when all Cuban assets in the United States were frozen, Castro evidently decided that the United States could not be appeased at any price he was willing to pay. In a characteristic gesture of defiance he thereupon proclaimed the nationalisation of the U.S. Embassy building in Havana. The Swiss diplomatic mission (which now handles American interests in Cuba) refused to evacuate the building. To evict the Swiss would lead to the rupture of relations with a small and harmless neutral country, a senseless step which would not be understood in Latin America and would hardly be backed by Cuba's allies. As I write, Castro still has not made a move against the Swiss.

He has, however, a far more impressive and effective way of demonstrating his disapproval of the state of Soviet-American relations. He has refused to sign the Nuclear Test-Ban agreement. To Western eyes this may seem a small matter, but by Communist standards it is a serious breach of discipline. All the Soviet satellites hurried up to sign, and inside the "Socialist camp" the line-up on the Test Ban issue is now as follows:

| Have Signed | Have Not Signed |
|---|---|
| *Soviet Union* | *China* |
| *Poland* | *North Korea* |
| *Czechoslovakia* | *North Vietnam* |
| *Hungary* | *Albania* |
| *Rumania* | *Cuba* |
| *Bulgaria* | |
| *East Germany* | |
| *Mongolia* | |

Cuba's failure to sign thus puts her squarely in the camp of the Chinese dissidents on an issue which the Communists regard as very important. For the Test-Ban agreement, to Communist eyes, is a significant step in the implementation of Khrushchev's policy of peaceful co-existence. To reject the agreement is therefore tantamount to rejecting co-existence itself—at least as the word is interpreted by Nikita Khrushchev.

That Cuba's top leaders harbour sympathies for Peking has been evident for some time. There is hardly one issue on which they have unequivocally come down on the Russian side. Officially, however, they have managed to maintain a position of neutrality. Thus the PURS theoretical organ, *Cuba Socialista*, has published both the relevant Chinese letter and the Soviet reply. The official Cuban attitude towards the Sino-Soviet dispute has been ably defined by "Ché" Guevara, who in his interview with the North American student group, declared:

> For us the Sino-Soviet dispute is one of the saddest events. We do not participate in this dispute. We are trying to mediate. But as it is a fact, we inform the people about it and it is discussed by the Party. Our Party's attitude is not to analyse who is in the right and who is not. We have our own position, and as they say in the American movies, any resemblance is purely coincidental. . . .

Thus, by mere coincidence, the Cuban attitude towards "peaceful co-existence" resembles that of the Chinese. Mao once defined peaceful co-existence as "slapping the imperialists' face to make them behave." Castro and Guevara would certainly not quarrel with this definition.

By a further coincidence Peking and Havana have the same high opinion of the importance of what they term "the national liberation struggle." This struggle, including anti-colonial armed risings, is considered by Peking to be the most important task of the Communist world movement, more important even than the struggle for peace. And for Havana the "national liberation struggle" of the peoples of Latin America is the basis of her entire foreign policy. Here indeed there is "coincidence," but in another sense, namely in the sense that Chinese and Cuban foreign policy interests *happen to coincide*. It is in the interests of both Peking and Havana to sabotage any Soviet-American rapprochement, and both governments are also vitally interested in fomenting the "national liberation struggle" in the underdeveloped areas of the world.

It is not a matter of Cuba's being or ever becoming a Chinese satellite, or of Castro or Guevara being ideological disciples of Mao.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cuba and Communist China are natural allies simply because they have the same foreign-policy interests. Only by the most brutal economic pressure could they be kept apart. So far, the Soviet Union has evidently been unwilling or unable to exert this pressure.

IN A CASE like that of Cuba it would be foolhardy to make predictions. All one can do is to establish an order of probabilities and possibilities—always keeping in mind that one of the most important factors in the shaping of history is the incalculable one of chance.

"Will there be a rising?" is a question which invariably comes up in conversations about Cuba. "Can events there possibly follow the Hungarian pattern?" Not only abroad but even on the island itself the analogy with Hungary is frequently drawn among opponents of the régime.

Yet three vital elements which made the Hungarian rising of 1956 possible are absent:

*1.* In Hungary in 1956 the ruling party was deeply split and completely demoralised. In Cuba to-day the régime has an undisputed leader. There is friction between *Fidelistas* and Old Guard Communists, but the latter are small men, pliable, opportunistic, and easily cowed. They might very well prove unreliable in a crisis, but they are hardly likely to attempt a coup or even to indulge in any form of organised oppositional activity.

*2.* In Hungary the youth of the country was literally one hundred per cent against the régime. There may well be anti-régime feeling among some rabid sectors of the Cuban youth, but it is quite evident, and even the most rabid opponents of the régime have admitted this to me, that a very sizeable portion of Cuba's youth is still enthusiastically "with Fidel" and would be willing to go out into the streets to fight for him.

*3.* Hungarian nationalism is violently anti-Russian, and the fact that the Hungarian Communist régime was sponsored by the Soviet Union was quite enough to completely discredit it. The Soviets have certainly not been able to make themselves popular in Cuba, but they are not much in evidence, and in general Cuban nationalism still plays in favour of the régime rather than against it.

Unless these factors change there would not appear to be much chance of a Hungarian-style rising in Cuba. Still, Latin American reactions are often very different from those of European nations. One encounters a great deal of bitterness, even black hatred of the régime, among the older generation of Cubans to-day. And is it entirely impossible (though hardly very likely) that one day Cuba will offer the world the unique spectacle of the older people rising against the young? There is also always the possibility of local flare-ups occasioned by food shortages or the actions of some petty tyrant. There have already been a number of such occurrences. But in general the Castro régime to-day gives the impression of being stable and secure.

IF THERE ARE GOING TO BE changes in Cuba, these are more likely to be occasioned by shifts in the international situation than by internal pressures.

Communism once appeared to offer two great advantages to Castro: the leadership of Latin American Communism, giving him command of an international organisation which he could use for the furtherance of his plans for revolution on a continental scale; and membership in the Soviet bloc or "Socialist camp," giving Cuba the security of full Soviet backing against the United States.

The first of these advantages has failed to materialise. The leaders of Latin American Communism refuse to acknowledge Castro as their chief, and with the exception of the Venezuelans they also refuse to follow the Cuban example of guerrilla warfare and sabotage.

And now the second advantage is also becoming doubtful. The Soviet Union is no longer unremittingly hostile towards the United States, and it is apparently pressuring Castro to give up his militantly anti-American attitude. The bulk of the Soviet troops which were stationed in Cuba in 1962 now seem to have been withdrawn. The cancellation of the ambitious Cuban industrialisation plans—and the statements by Castro and Guevara on the need to concentrate on agriculture and the sugar industry—indicate that Soviet and satellite deliveries of capital goods have ceased. The economic difficulties of the Soviet bloc give reason to doubt that even day-to-day deliveries of food and raw materials will be continued indefinitely on the present scale.

In view of this, I am not surprised that Cuban propaganda nowadays puts far less emphasis on "the friendship of the Soviet camp" than it did only a year ago, and that there is less and less mention of this friendship in Castro's speeches (although they are surely long enough to cover every subject of importance to him).

On the other hand, friendship with non-Communist Algeria is now stressed in Cuban newspapers. At the last 26th of July celebrations, neither the Soviet and Chinese delegations (nor even such an important guest as Indonesian Communist Party Secretary Aidit) were given as much prominence as a non-Communist guest



PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

—the Algerian Vice-Premier Houari Boumedienne.

Algeria's Ben Bella often talks of Castro as his "mentor" and of Cuba as "an example" for Algeria to emulate. Actually, the Algerian example is far more attractive for Cuba than vice-versa. Algeria contrives to champion the cause of "national liberation" and anti-colonialism in Africa and—at the same time—obtain substantial aid from the "colonialist powers." Its régime firmly suppresses the Old Guard Communists, and maintains no relations with the Communist world movement; yet its relations with the Soviet Union are cordial, and it is on even friendlier terms with the Chinese.

If the Soviet Union's relations with the United States continue to improve, and her relations with China to deteriorate, Castro may well find the "Socialist Camp" such an uncomfortable place to stay in that he will try to edge out of it in order to obtain some sort of non-aligned, anti-imperialist, "Algerian" status.

## At Cwmrhydyceirw Quarry

1

Let the fused boulder crack, the inert weight
In this gigantic theatre pluck new groans
From lithic silence; tongues issue forth from stones
Sullen, rebellious, or reconciled to fate.
How like that circle where Dante's words relate
How spirits noticed the shadow he alone
Cast; here stones rain down, and the rock intones
Tablets from tombs, tomes for none to translate.

Yet grooves unwind voices; and he who engraves
This stone, soon in his childhood's park to lie,
Shall cut lines incised like a breathing cry,
And give to stone that undulant line of waves.
But who had guessed, in the hush of many graves
Riven by love, it was Roethke's turn to die?

2

Life seems unquarried before the small stones' hail
And electric storm of rock hurled to the pit,
Silent before the blast, showing after it
Tablets fallen in a mass of stones and shale.
So thunders break man; great undertakings fail
In a flash, and broken lie; then only wit
And a rope held, will harness what here was split:
Through rock facets tenacious secrets prevail.

Between this torrent of boulders and the last
In the valley of giants, knowing no weight can stay
The force of roots, we trample the red clay,
Seeking a stillborn offspring of the blast
From silence freed, by glory of diction paid,
Now needed for his own gigantic glade.

*Vernon Watkins*

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# BOOKS & WRITERS

## Palinurus at Sixty

*By Richard Ellmann*

CYRIL CONNOLLY has needed to think of himself as blasted and of his age as a losing game in order to give meaning to the six decades in which he has now participated. No other contemporary writer has made so ebullient a career out of being dispirited. Through this state of mind he has found the sardonic images which entitle his books: the youth held down by "enemies of promise;" the drowned pilot, Palinurus, in his "unquiet grave;" the cavorter on "the condemned playground." His new book[1] has its ruling metaphor in the jailbird, still condemned (like the playground), to be sure, but this time not by school authorities or other chthonic powers; instead he is condemned by, and perhaps to, his own "previous convictions."

Before his title is assumed to be altogether lighthearted, it may be recalled that the metaphor of the prisoner comes to Connolly easily, and appears often in his work with grave as well as jocular associations. The hero of *The Rock Pool* leaves an actual prison to find the outside world still a confinement. In *The Unquiet Grave,* Connolly wrily despairs, "Imprisoned in every fat man a thin one is wildly signalling to be let out," and offers a sombre self-portrait: "Sometimes at night I get a feeling of being smothered by my own personality, of choking through being in the world. During these moments the universe seems a prison wherein I lie fettered by the chains of my senses and blinded through being myself." At first this melancholy, in which he alternately broods and frolics, may appear only histrionic. It is more than that, however. If disheartenment is his honeyjar, he would like to stay away from it. Unwillingly he dips again. The note of thwart and blight bassoons beneath his treble enthusiasms.

He both sounds and mocks it when, in the preface to his new book, he calls himself and his essays "an ageing Narcissus complete with pool." This image, habitual with him too, is also one of imprisonment. It brings to mind other appraisals of himself, such as a penitent passage from *Enemies of Promise*: "Myself a lazy, irresolute person, overvain and overmodest, unsure in my judgments and unable to finish what I have begun," and another, an explanation of his literary demeanour, from *The Unquiet Grave*: "I am one of those whom suffering has made empty and frivolous; each night in my dreams I pull the scab off a wound; each day, vacuous and habit-ridden, I let it re-form." There are fresh self-belittlements in *Previous Convictions,* where, for instance, he jokingly calls himself a "much-dropped, deposed, dethroned, decapitated father figure, a wondering Wotan." Ranged against these are occasional statements which, while ironically inflated, are not unassuming. So he writes, "Secretly I am convinced that there is no happiness outside my prose and I want the world to know it."

THIS INTRICATE mixture of self-mockery-and-rebuke, of remorse, of half-meant pretensions, of disconsolate but fairly steady thinking about himself, makes one search for parallels among characters in Russian literature, although Connolly would prefer that we look among the French. He adopts a quite graceful Chekhovian stance in resigning himself to his own contradictions, which he laments without trying to shed. He does relinquish later some of their more exaggerated expressions. He can be disarmingly apologetic for his dark moods, as when he writes of his editorials for *Horizon*, in the preface to *Ideas and Places*: "On looking back, I think that perhaps I was a little crazy and that the idea of decadence hugged and haunted me as if I were some Hebrew prophet." Yet he does not altogether forswear, since he reprints.

Connolly's work turns upon attitudes rather than ideas, attitudes which he mulls over, questions, ridicules, and then reasserts, conducting the whole process with unstudied elegance.

[1] *Previous Convictions: Selected Writings of a Decade.* Hamish Hamilton, 30s.



PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The central attitude, already implied, is the sense of his having gone somehow, as he likes to say, "off the boil." He attributes this, perhaps with reason, to the effect of the forced growth he underwent at Eton. Excerpts from his journal of that time, some of which are published here and some in "A Georgian Boyhood" (as he bitterly labels the autobiographical portion of *Enemies of Promise*), reveal an early intellectual development which was extraordinary. Yet after only one try at the novel, a somewhat belated picture of expatriate decay at "Trou-sur-Mer" in *The Rock Pool,* he gave it up and has never forgiven himself for not being a great novelist.

In turning to criticism, autobiography, and the stylised journal, Connolly has regularly disparaged his adopted trade as a *pis aller*. No one has written more strongly or incessantly against book reviewing than this inveterate reviewer, who drifted into it, he says regretfully, through a lack of moral stamina, and who complains about the quotidian (or at least hebdomadal) necessity of quenching inexhaustible authors, about the need to expend one's best upon the mediocre in others. In a far-flung trope, he has likened reviewing to building bridges in some impossible tropical climate, a white man's grave. But these strenuous attacks in the past have carried him too far, and in this book he offers a sidestepping defence: reviewing has tempered his improvidence, widened his knowledge, respected his solitude, saved him from false starts and frustrations. The bird suddenly thinks himself grateful for being pinioned.

THE NEW BOOK is arranged in four parts, the last largely a portrait of Connolly himself under a new *persona* of Mr. Smartiboots. In the first part, "The Visible World," he makes a tour, grand but honest, of the world of ancient monuments, of the rococo, of the water kingdom, the animal world, and gardens. Connolly is a sensible as well as an experienced guide, for he understands what it is to be a tourist as well as what it is to be an ancient monument: "I have known the Acropolis to resemble a set of false teeth in a broken plate," he says. He is esurient of foreign places, as of unusual experiences in general, but keeps his head. The same appetite, and control of it, appear in his exploration of "Poseidon's world" to which he has had flippered access: "It is a world of astonishing colour yet eventual monotony and perhaps it is as well that we have to come out." Towards the lower animal kingdom he has a special attachment, and particularly towards lemurs, six of whom he has had for pets. Such creatures prompt him to one of his most emphatic if least firmly grounded assertions:

> ...the lower the life-form, the nearer it approaches to a condition of perpetual ecstasy. Zoos are concentration camps in which we triumph over the ringleaders of ancient civilisations—fish, reptile, bird, mammal—whom we suspect to have led lives richer than our own.

Here he allies himself once more with the prisoners rather than their warders.

The second and third sections of Connolly's book are about those less ecstatic creatures, literary men; one discusses in turn great European writers with whom he feels in kinship, from Petronius to Alain-Fournier, and the other discusses modern English and American writers. These essays are good but short-winded; they shake hands quickly and affectionately with their subjects. Often splendid sentences are struck from the encounter. The qualities he elicits from other writers are, as he more or less acknowledges, usually autobiographical. If Petronius is a "learned scallywag" and an "aesthete in adventure," these epithets are somewhat applicable to Connolly as well; if he finds Shakespeare in the sonnets to be "defeatist rather than competitive," we remember Connolly's determination on leaving Eton to have been: "Never compete." If Walpole was driven by terror towards an artificial world, Connolly also shelters from nightmares in art. There is a statement about Flaubert that seems to bind critic and novelist: "Prometheus has formed his chains and found his vulture." In another frame of mind, Connolly is attracted by the "closed ingrowing vision" of *Le Grand Meaulnes*.

The strength of Connolly's perceptions derives from an almost too knowing apprehension of his own character, and from a brilliant effort to join in the life of earlier periods in London or Paris. He likes these cities within certain dates, and enjoys remembering good meals at restaurants which have mostly gone out of existence. The past offers better flavours than the present. This propensity to live sometime else leads him to imaginary conversations, a form at which he has always been adept. He offers a fine summary of the "classic of adultery," Sainte-Beuve's love affair with Madame Victor Hugo:

> It should be printed as a case history and handed to every young couple as they leave the Registrar. "But he was my best friend," Hugo might have exclaimed. "Of course, no point in it otherwise, was there?" "And he admired my work so much." "And you his?" "We both felt so sorry for him, he was practically one of the family." "That's what they said about you." It was the revenge of the Iago of talent upon the Othello of genius....

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

With modern writers he feels freer to take exception, and often looks, gently but probingly, for their secrets. Of Ezra Pound, he notes that, while at first his learning looks immense, "as one reads on, the same quotations from Provençal or Anglo-Saxon recur, the same phrases, the same jokes. The field is much more limited than it seems when we first look down on it." And he says of Gertrude Stein, "Every parody of her has failed because one cannot parody the monotonous boredom of her writing unless one has an equal amount of learning and intelligence to suppress."

That he should think of parody is inevitable, for to a man who undermines gloom with joking, and then challenges his own frivolity, parody is a natural form. In the last part of his book he allows himself the luxury of several parodic flights. For James Bond he concocts a more monstrous adventure than any Ian Fleming has devised, one which brings out the full potential of nausea in that particular brand of fiction. He also takes up the beats, and American university collections of contemporary writers, and research in general. A creative artist in our time envisages death, he says, as "pushing up theses."

THE LAST CHAPTER, his most ambitious personal statement in the book, is called not "What I Believe" but "Beyond Believing."[2] Some of his thoughts here may have been roused by Edmund Wilson's recent *Reflections at Sixty*, though they are quite unlike each other. As a critic, Connolly is of course more diffident than Wilson, more interested in tones and less in concepts, less determined, less acidic, less sustained in argument. His criticism is less weighty and depends more upon the quality of self-depiction than Wilson's does. Yet there is an ingratiating loyalty to himself and his own experience of life, and he puts this in the final essay with a kind of prankish wisdom. Beyond believing for him, then, are sleep, to begin with, and next, irresponsibility. After these he stands with art, which he defines afresh as "the conscious apprehension of the unconscious ecstasy of created beings." Having gone so far, he retreats a little; his belief in art is not like a mystic's in his god, but needs to be phrased more cautiously:

> I believe that in certain physical states (not extremes of pain, fear, lust, or ecstasy) the literature . . . produced between latitudes 40 and 60 in the last two thousand years under seasonal conditions can justify existence to me while I also live between latitudes 40 and 60, and am subject to a similar awareness of the seasons.

[2] Printed originally in ENCOUNTER, April, 1961.


# The Prefects

## British Leadership and the Public School Tradition

*A Comparative Study in the Making of Rulers*

RUPERT WILKINSON

How did the Victorian public school produce rulers, and what sort of rulers did they turn out to be? That is the basic theme of this book. It sees in the Victorian-Edwardian public school a tribal community, whose subtle pressures and customs curiously reflected the spirit of Parliament and Civil Service, of District Commissioner and Justice of the Peace. * 35*s net*

# James Anthony Froude

## A Biography

*Volume II: 1857–1894*

WALDO HILARY DUNN

Like the first volume, this is enriched by a wealth of hitherto unpublished material supplied by Froude's daughter Margaret; it covers the last thirty-eight years of his life: the completion of his authorship, his editorial and political work; his travels in America, Australasia, the West Indies; the Regius Professorship of Modern History at Oxford. * *Illustrated* 55*s net*

# The Norse Atlantic Saga

*Being the Norse Voyages of Discovery and Settlement to Iceland, Greenland, America*

GWYN JONES

The theme here is the Norsemen's search for new land, 'habitable and trespassable', westward across the North Atlantic from their homes in continental Scandinavia. There are also translations of the literary and historical documents, including the *Book of the Icelanders*, the *Book of the Settlements* (in selection), the *Greenlanders' Saga*, and *Eirik the Red's Saga*. * *Illustrated* 30*s net*

# An Atheist's Values

RICHARD ROBINSON

After examining what it is to estimate values and to choose goods, the author discusses beauty, truth, reason, love, conscientiousness, religion, the State, equality, freedom, tolerance, justice, and democracy. He gives most attention to reason, which he recommends, and to religion, which he rejects. * 28*s net*

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS


PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This formulation shows, in spite of its punctilious insistence upon boundaries, a shift in Connolly's aesthetic. He has always kept two points of view; one is sociological, though mildly sociological in comparison with his school-mate George Orwell. He has joined writers in terms of their respective generations, seeing them as bound by common purposes, common styles, and affected by a shared "literary situation." But he has also, with some urging from Pater, looked to literature for golden moments, arrived at quite individually. Now he seems to be verging towards a Blake-like assertion of ecstasy or joy as the essential quality in all human life, most apparent in lower animals, but still graspable by man. Art, a much more communal activity in this view, is a means to pick most, if not all, of the locks which secure the human prison. This recognition of a latent ecstasy as the condition of life is expressed here briefly but with conviction. Palinurus may be on his way to a new "L'Allegro." At any rate, the acknowledgement of art, and also of love, with which the book ends, gains force by riding a strong sea of scepticism.

A major virtue of Connolly's prose can be stated negatively: it does not bore us, it does not flatter, it parades no pomposities. The mandarin dialect blends subtly with the vernacular. This voice so civilised and undeceived, so convivial for all its bleak awareness, is one of the ornaments—baroque verging on rococo—of contemporary criticism, as well as one of the few solaces of Sunday morning in London.

# Mark Twain as Hamlet

*By David Daiches*

MARK TWAIN'S greatest work is *Huckleberry Finn*, but in some respects his most interesting is *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* because in the latter book we see him trapped in the ambiguous implications of modern industrial democratic civilisation in a way that illuminates a whole area of modern history, British as well as American.

When Macaulay reviewed Southey's *Colloquies* in 1830, he rebuked Southey for his nostalgic sighing after the picturesque backwardness of earlier periods of history, and he looked forward with confident optimism to the time when "a population of fifty millions, better fed, clad, and lodged than the English of our time, will cover these islands," when "cultivation, rich as that of a flower-garden, will be carried to the very tops of Ben Nevis and Helvellyn" and "machines constructed on principles yet undiscovered will be seen in every house... there will be no highways but railroads, no travelling but by steam." This would be achieved, Macaulay believed, not by state control but "by the prudence and energy of the people."

> Our rulers will best promote the improvement of the nation by strictly confining themselves to their own legitimate duties, by leaving capital to find its most lucrative course, commodities their fair price, industry and intelligence their natural reward, idleness and folly their natural punishment, by maintaining peace, by defending property, by diminishing the price of law, and by observing strict economy in every department of the State. Let the Government do this: the People will assuredly do the rest.

This is a classic statement of laissez-faire liberalism, combining a belief in progress and private enterprise with faith in machinery and an ever-expanding industrialism.

The price that England paid for this sort of liberalism—and for the Industrial Revolution which partly produced it and was partly produced by it—was heavy; it was pointed out with bitter eloquence in different ways by Carlyle, Ruskin, Matthew Arnold, and William Morris. Yet Carlyle ended with his unsavoury doctrine of hero-worship; Ruskin and Morris became involved in their own versions of the "good old days" fallacy; Arnold, when it came to the political pinch, was with the defenders of private property against any attempt to shift the balance of power within the state. Where is progress and where is reaction?

It can be argued that in the long run it is progress to accept, rather than reject, the Industrial Revolution, based though it was on a policy of "leaving capital to find its most lucrative course," and it is reactionary to wish that the Industrial Revolution had never occurred and that people were spared the benefits of modern machines. But in the short run the progressive must denounce the horrors—child labour, slums, the blackening of the countryside—that industrialism brings and try to temper the effects of uncontrolled private enterprise by bringing in the state to impose certain controls

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and guarantee minimum working conditions. This is how things went in nineteenth-century England. A view of society based on a pre-industrial pastoralism is bound to be reactionary, however generously based on response to the darkness and suffering involved in industrialisation. Yet if modern industrial democratic civilisation is essentially based on an economic free-for-all, with individual economic self-interest the primary motivating power in society; if the smart operator and the unscrupulous financier are all that industrial democracy can offer in place of the feudal lord and robber baron of old and the "self-made man" the main myth that nourishes the democratic imagination; then the generous mind will be hard put to it to choose between Macaulay and Carlyle and in the end may well choose the latter or else give up in despair. (This is to assume, of course, that he has no third or fourth choice, no Marx or Keynes. And I am discussing those to whom, for one reason or another, no such choice was available.)

THIS SITUATION can be confusing enough in England. But cross it with the American Dream, the vision of the great new free classless society implacably opposed to the monarchies, aristocracies, dynastic struggles, social inequalities and effete traditions of Europe, and you get something more confusing still. Beside Macaulay's reproach to Southey we can set the apostrophe addressed by the mid-nineteenth century American journalist J. Ross Browne to the "mighty kings and chieftains" of the European past:

> If the Coliseum at Rome had accommodated fifty millions of people instead of fifty thousand, would it have taught them the blessings of peace and good government, or disseminated useful knowledge among them? If all your palaces were built of pure gold instead of marble, would it have caused the thousands of human beings that you were continually embroiling in war to entertain a more fraternal spirit towards each other? ... We don't build pyramids and coliseums, but we build railroads. The smallest steamboat that paddles its way up the Hudson is greater than the greatest monument of antiquity, and does more to promote civilisation and happiness of mankind; the wires of our electric telegraphs carry more power in them than all the armies you ever brought into battle.

IT IS IN THIS SPIRIT that Mark Twain's Connecticut Yankee sets out to transform King Arthur's Britain. Soon after getting to work, "in various quiet nooks and corners I had the beginnings of all sorts of industries under way," and eventually "the telegraph, the telephone, the

**BRECHT ON THEATRE**
*Bertolt Brecht*
Including much that has not yet been published in book form even in German, this selection of essays and articles is the first to put his ideas into chronological order and show them evolving from his early undergraduate critical articles to the incomplete theory of theatrical dialectics which was occupying him when he died. **About 50s**

**THE WORKHOUSE DONKEY**
*John Arden*
First produced on 8 July, 1963, at the Chichester Festival Theatre, this concerns the cleaning-up of a northern town by a new chief constable, who falls foul of the local Conservative and Labour Parties. **15s**

**SWEETLY SINGS THE DONKEY**
*Shelagh Delaney*
This is the first collection of prose writings by Shelagh Delaney, which reveals her vivid, impressionistic style, an open heart, and an ear cocked suspiciously for cant and cruelty. **16s**

**THE BERNARD BERENSON TREASURY**
*Edited by Hanna Kiel*
An anthology, more than half of it material that has never been published before, which is a remarkable self-portrait of one of the most civilised minds of our time. With 11 pages of half-tone illustrations. **36s**

METHUEN

11 NEW FETTER LANE
LONDON EC4

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

phonograph, the typewriter, the sewing-machine, and all the thousand willing and handy servants of steam and electricity were working their way into favour. We had a steamboat or two on the Thames, we had steam war-ships, and the beginnings of a steam commercial marine; I was getting ready to send out an expedition to discover America." The Old World had been given the advantages of the New, and now the two could be brought together. The pre-industrial past had been industrialised, with equality of opportunity for all. Yet neither Mark Twain nor his Yankee hero is altogether happy about this. Henry Nash Smith, in his admirable study of Mark Twain's development,[1] points out that running through *A Connecticut Yankee*, and running directly counter to its overt belief in progress and industrialism and its scorn for the backward, class-ridden society of Arthur's Britain, there is a yearning for a pre-industrial Arcadia. Professor Nash Smith quotes an entry in Mark Twain's notebook made at a time when *A Connecticut Yankee* was barely begun: "He mourns his lost land—has come to England & revisited it, but it is all changed & become old, so old!—& it was so fresh & new, so virgin before.... Has lost all interest in life—is found dead next morning—suicide." In spite of the snobberies, ignorance, and cruelty of sixth-century Britain, its landscape has the glory and the freshness of a dream. Now this special kind of dream-feeling, Nash Smith points out, is associated by Mark Twain both with the American South and with "the dreamlike peace and happiness of childhood." The ambiguity is fundamental, and is linked to Mark Twain's ambiguous feelings about the machine.

> The machine is theoretically good but emotionally disturbing. Like most of his countrymen, Mark Twain oscillated between enthusiasm for the brave new world of science and technology, and nostalgia for the simple agrarian world that the industrial revolution was destroying before his eyes. *A Connecticut Yankee* expresses his emotions about the shattering transformation and is on this account, for all its confusions (indeed, because of them), a central document in American intellectual history.

America is committed to progress; it is the country of the future. Yet how often is Mark Twain emotionally compelled to set the Hannibal of his childhood—"the matter of Hannibal," as Nash Smith calls it, locating it precisely in the pattern of Mark Twain's work—against the screamingly competitive industrial world of his later years! The language of Wall Street is both the language of free-enterprise America, and so of progress and virtue, and the language of those smart operators whose financial buccaneering seemed a threat to everything the American Dream had stood for. Time and again Hank Morgan, Mark Twain's Yankee, reduces Arthur's Britain to size by describing its institutions in terms of financial speculation.

> Knight-errantry is a most chuckle-headed trade, and it is tedious hard work, too, but I begin to see that there *is* money in it, after all, if you have luck.... A successful whirl in the knight-errantry line—now what is it when you blow away the nonsense and come down to the cold facts? It's just a corner in pork, that's all, and you can't make anything else out of it.

This financial language is *reductive*, reducing such an institution as knight-errantry to a money-making operation, and at the same time it is produced as evidence of the hard-headed, practical (and therefore wholly admirable) attitude of the Yankee. What Carlyle called the "cash nexus" thus both destroys and justifies: to apply it to mediaeval institutions is to expose them—but this is because it is the proper standard to apply. Or is it? When Dan Beard, the socialist artist who did the illustrations for *A Connecticut Yankee*, interpreted many of the incidents as attacks on American capitalists, even to the point of giving an arrogant slave-driver the face of Jay Gould (the railroad millionaire and notorious financial manipulator), Mark Twain, even though he himself "was not strongly attracted towards any of the radical programmes," did not protest. Indeed, he hailed Beard's illustrations with enthusiasm.

LEFT-WING AMERICANS who attacked with equal relish both British institutions and American financiers and monopolists (expressing what Nash Smith calls "the blend of jingoism and pro-labour sentiment characteristic of much grass-roots radicalism") did not see any contradiction in *A Connecticut Yankee*, but hailed it, in the words of one reviewer, as "one long satire on modern England and Englishmen." Yet England was the pioneer industrial country, and the book glorified industrialism. It was left for British reviewers, as Nash Smith shows, to point out some of the inconsistencies not only in Mark Twain's attitude but in the American attitude in general:

> The Republic is a "land of liberty," yet its commerce, its railways, and its manufactures are in the hands of a few cliques of almost irresponsible capitalists, who control tariffs, markets, and politics in order that they may be enriched, to the disadvantage of the masses. Which, then, is to be most admired—the supremacy of a knight

[1] *Mark Twain: The Development of a Writer.* The Belknap Press of Harvard University; and Oxford University Press, 38s.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

or the success of a financier? Under which King will the Americans serve—the ideal or the real? Will they own allegiance to King ARTHUR or JAY GOULD?

This was the *Daily Telegraph*, doubtless glad to get its own back for Mark Twain's digs at England in his book; but the writer did not realise that the dilemma was not exclusively American, even though faith in the American Dream exacerbated it. It was a dilemma inherent in an industrial democratic society. Nash Smith comments: "Mark Twain's inability to make Hank Morgan a consistent character parallels Turner's and [Henry] Adams' failure to find a basis for democracy in a world dominated by technology." The agrarian strain in American social idealism made the problem particularly acute. *A Connecticut Yankee*, Nash Smith remarks, "was an imaginative version of the central issue in American culture of the 1880s and the following decades—the need to adapt an agrarian system of values to an industrial order that was felt by thinkers as diverse as Henry George, Edward Bellamy, Frederick Jackson Turner, and especially Henry Adams." We are reminded that William Morris, socialist though he was, saw his ideal England of the future as smokeless and non-industrial. The ambiguities of progress teased most of the imaginative thinkers of the nineteenth century in both Britain and America.

"In the end, Mark Twain's uncertainty concerning the effects of the industrial revolution undercuts the ideology of progress." So Nash Smith sums up the lesson of *A Connecticut Yankee*, a book which begins as satire, proceeds partly as farce and partly as propaganda, and ends as nightmare.

MARK TWAIN WAS INVOLVED in the dilemma of his age, but he was also involved in an acutely personal dilemma. He had begun his writing career as a humorist, drawing on the native vernacular tradition, the direct experience and "horse sense" of the rural or small-town American, to undermine the genteel pretensions and unreal ideals of the official culture that came from the east but was clung to with particular tenacity by all in the Middle West who wished to vindicate their respectability. He was not, however, by nature a bold man, and he found it hard to develop an art-form which gave full expression to his deep sense of the bogus nature of much of the official culture available to Americans of his time. From the beginning he had a habit of looking nervously over his shoulder at the representatives of the genteel tradition and making placatory gestures towards them.

*The Innocents Abroad* (originally written as

**DAVID HUME**

**D. F. PEARS (editor)**

**A philosophical symposium (based on BBC Third Programme talks) in the same series as *The Revolution in Philosophy*, *The Nature of Metaphysics* and *Freedom and the Will*. The contributors are: Philippa Foot, Patrick Gardner, Professor Stuart Hampshire, David Pears, Professor H. R. Trevor-Roper, Geoffrey Warnock and Bernard Williams. *16s.***

**ERASMUS DARWIN**

**DESMOND KING-HELE**

**'As he emerges from the kindly study that King-Hele has made of him, Erasmus was at once boisterously resourceful and exceptionally talented, as a physician, a scientist, and a poet.'—*Guardian*.**

**'Lively and germane to topical controversy.'—*Daily Telegraph*. *30s.***

**LESSING**
**The Founder of Modern German Literature**

**H. B. GARLAND**

**This concise and informative estimate of Lessing's life and work is the only general survey to appear in English since 1899. *Reissue 21s.***

**MACMILLAN**

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a series of letters to the San Francisco *Alta California* and published in book form, with some cautious omissions and revisions, in 1869) shows him fluctuating between mockery and respectability, between providing his American readers with the kind of edifying guide-book to Europe they expected from their men of letters and exploiting that other American attitude to Europe which saw it as representing a burden of history to be cast off by the man of the new world. It was hard for Mark Twain to be both an American humorist and an American man of letters, for the former role tended to undermine the latter. Yet he wanted to be both. He was writing for the *Atlantic* at the same time as he was working on *Huckleberry Finn*, and the two roles were in many respects incompatible.

His dilemma emerges with symbolic force in the incident of the *Atlantic* dinner for Whittier's seventieth birthday in December 1877. Whittier, Longfellow, Howells, Holmes, and Charles Eliot Norton were all present, as well as Mark Twain. When it was Twain's turn to speak he gave a carefully prepared talk—one of the funniest things he ever wrote—in which his instinct to debunk the New England sages was given fairly free range. He told of three tramps and imposters, claiming to be respectively Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Emerson, and Mr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, visiting the lonely log-cabin of a Californian miner, exploiting the miner's hospitality to the full while reeling off quotations from their namesakes' poetry in contexts which made them absurd. "Longfellow," for example, goes off the next morning having stolen his host's boots, remarking:

> *Lives of great men all remind us*
> *We can make our lives sublime;*
> *And departing, leave behind us*
> *Footprints on the sands of Time.*

The speech, fully reported in the press, caused extreme indignation, not so much in Boston as further west, and Mark Twain himself wrote ten days later an abject apology to Messrs. Emerson, Longfellow, and Holmes, beginning: "Gentlemen: I come before you, now, with the mien & posture of the guilty—not to excuse, gloss, or extenuate, but only to offer my repentance," and explaining his conduct on the grounds that, not possessing a fine nature, he had acted innocently.

For the rest of his life Mark Twain wavered between thinking the whole incident a horrid scandal of which he was thoroughly ashamed and thinking that it was a first-rate speech which he could re-read with pride. Nash Smith's account of this episode rightly places it as a primary clue for an understanding of the dual forces and the dual ambitions which tugged at Twain. He had been

> a victim of a demonic possession. His unconscious had uttered a truth under the guise of burlesque that was much more frightening to him than to the targets of his derision.... Mark Twain was not consciously prepared to repudiate the conception of literature represented by Emerson and Longfellow and Holmes; but he had a half-suppressed awareness that the role assigned to them by the official culture was false and sterile.

In *Huckleberry Finn* Mark Twain found the appropriate art-form, the appropriate *persona*, and the moment of unstable equilibrium to enable him to use the comic vernacular tradition seriously in a work of great literature. Here the morality of experience is brought up squarely against the morality of history and convention with an ironic force which enlarges the scope and meaning of the novel far beyond the "Matter of Hannibal" to make it a profound exploration of some of the perennial problems concerning the relation between tradition and the individual consciousness. Some of the moral ambiguities in the book are planted there by the author, while others find their way there in spite of him. Huck's and Jim's quest for freedom is in the end unattainable, as Mark Twain concedes in abandoning the images of happiness with Huck and Jim on the raft and devoting the last ten chapters to Tom Sawyer and his heartless romantic pranks at the expense of Jim. (But neither Tom nor his creator knew that the pranks were heartless.) Thus, as Nash Smith puts it, Mark Twain acknowledges "that the vernacular values embodied in his story were mere figments of the imagination, not capable of being reconciled with social reality."

What, then, are we left with? A vivid awareness of the reality (which is not the same as the social possibility) of the moral world established by Huck and Jim on the raft; an equally vivid awareness of the hollowness and sometimes the downright evil of the codes prescribed by convention and tradition; a sense of the absurdity and unconscious cruelty of a false romanticism; and an uneasy feeling—deriving from the strangely powerful incident where the murderous Colonel Sherburn dominates the mob with his cool courage—that the passive stupidity of most ordinary people perhaps makes them unredeemable after all. This last seems a very un-American notion, but it weaves like a dark streak through much of Mark Twain's later work. Hank Morgan in *A Connecticut Yankee* ends his career in Arthur's Britain with the massacre (in ten minutes, with Gatling guns) of twenty-five thousand men and with a view of

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the common people as "human muck"; Pudd'nhead Wilson, in the novel of that name, is another "transcendent hero" whose aloof intellectual superiority asserts a truth that "destroys both elements of the long-established pattern of dominant culture versus vernacular protest"; in *The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg*—a story which is in essence a simple fable—the outsider-detective similarly uncovers the horrid truth beneath the town's outward show of respectability; and in the unfinished *The Mysterious Stranger* Satan seems to voice the author's own disillusionment with the possibilities of man's continuous moral improvement when he describes mankind as "dull and ignorant and trivial and conceited . . . a shabby, poor, worthless lot all round." Here is how Nash Smith sums the matter up:

> Just as Mark Twain had poured all the capital he could muster into the typesetter, he had invested all his political enthusiasm, his humanitarian emotion, and his hope for the future of his country in the idea that the common man was the prime creative force in history. Hank Morgan's conclusion that the mass of the nation in Arthur's Britain was only "human muck," which was of course a judgment on the mass of the American nation in the 1880s, proclaimed the bankruptcy of the writer's idealisms. The outcome had been in sight since the moment when Mark Twain confronted the fact that Huck's and Jim's quest for freedom was doomed to failure. For these protagonists had become the bearers of the vernacular system of values that had sustained his writing career. . . . Since Mark Twain was trying to sustain by force of will a belief that had already lost its intuitive solidity, the outcome of the story was latent in it from the beginning.

This view of Mark Twain's almost Swiftian progress may come as a surprise to many of his readers, but it is borne out by much in his unofficial writings, such as the comments he wrote in the margins of books and the vast, inchoate mass of autobiographical material that he wrote and dictated throughout a long period in the latter part of his life and intended for posthumous publication only.

Perhaps Mark Twain's dilemma appeared all the greater to him because of his own timidity. He conceded more than was necessary to public taste and convention; he slashed his own writings at the request of his wife and others. He has no references at all to sex in his published writing, yet he could write in his private notes that "of the delights of *this* world man cares *most* for sexual intercourse. He will . . . risk fortune, character, reputation, life itself. And what . . . has he done? . . . you would never guess *—he has left it out of his heaven!*"

This and other jottings can be found in a

TAVISTOCK PUBLICATIONS

*The Unconscious before Freud*

**Lancelot Law Whyte**

*Foreword by*
*Dame Edith Sitwell*

This book describes a phase in the history of man: the years between 1680 and 1880 when 'self-conscious European man discovered his unconscious'. Whyte discusses the ideas of novelists, poets, mystics, philosophers, and scientists each of whom discovered in his own experience the need to infer unconscious mental activity. He interprets this as man's attempt to re-establish the unity of mind and matter lost in Descartes' science, and suggests that the next step should be a closer study of the organic co-ordination of the human brain-mind.

**Edith Sitwell:**
I do not know of any more important work by a living writer.

**Arthur Koestler:**
has more to offer than the title promises. It not only traces the ancestry of Freud, but puts the whole problem of consciousness into a new perspective.

**The Times Literary Supplement:**
Mr. Whyte undoubtedly makes his case.

**Lancet:**
Erudite and thought-provoking.

**British Medical Journal:**
this valuable and stimulating contribution.

**British Journal of Psychology:**
on trends, on guiding ideas, and on basic issues most stimulating.

**New Society:**
very stimulating. Every teacher and writer who is concerned with the history of ideas . . . should have it on his shelves.

**Cosmos:**
an important work—a prophetic vision of the direction in which psycho-physical theory must develop.

25s

11 New Fetter Lane, London, E.C.4.


PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rather scrappy little book by Caroline Harnsberger, *Mark Twain's Views of Religion*,[2] in which a somewhat perfunctory introduction is followed by a collection of extracts from Mark Twain's notebooks, marginal notes in books, essays, letters, and the autobiography. Mark Twain was not a Christian; he believed that the Bible was a purely human book produced under no special inspiration, and he did not believe in the divinity of Jesus. He radically objected to the Bible's view of the nature of God. "If I were going to construct a God, I would furnish Him with some ways and qualities and characteristics which the present Bible One lacks. He would not stoop to *ask* for any man's compliments, praises, flatteries; and He would be far above *exacting* them. I would have Him as self-respecting as the better sort of man in these regards...." He seems to have been more or less a Deist, but intermittently. He was capable of breaking out with great savagery about the Bible and Christianity, but at other times preserved a decent reticence so as not to hurt people's feelings. But he never published anything of this, and this was only one of many respects in which he remained in thrall to the genteel tradition. This aspect of his character, and indeed the whole question of Mark Twain's divided personality, supplies a central theme in Douglas Grant's useful little book.[3]

The more one reads Mark Twain the more the belief grows that by temperament and conviction he was more or less an anarchist as well as a religious sceptic. One does not need oneself to be an anarchist or a sceptic to regret that he never had the full courage of his convictions. Of course it is true (as Nash Smith is at pains to explain) that his convictions were themselves mixed and subject to change, and this mixture and this change produced some of the major tensions in his work. But he seems to have shied away from the full implications of his own insights. Tom Sawyer's antics at the end of *Huckleberry Finn* represent a refusal on the author's part to face his tragic vision. It would have been too shocking both for his audience and for himself.

Thus he is not like the traditional comedian who longs to play Hamlet: he is rather Hamlet who puts on an antic disposition in order to save his reason. The result is sometimes disturbing, always interesting, and, on one occasion at least, truly great literature.

[2] *Mark Twain's Views of Religion*. By Caroline Thomas Harnsberger. Evanston, Illinois: The Schori Press, 1961.

[3] *Twain*. By Douglas Grant. *Writers and Critics*. Oliver & Boyd, 5s.

# Other People's Values

**Development for Free Asia.** By Maurice Zinkin. *Chatto & Windus*, 25s. **New Nations.** By Lucy Mair. *Weidenfeld & Nicolson*, 25s. **The Morning After.** By Brian Crozier. *Methuen*, 36s.

"Underdeveloped countries"—the phrase has its own magic whether we expiate in it a feeling of guilt or lose ourselves in the contemplation of history moving visibly like the second hand of a clock. Dozens of countries in the world to-day present a spectacle of appalling poverty combined with a moving aspiration towards something better, a higher standard of living often symbolised in artefacts pathetic by their inadequacy. "Development" may mean getting richer quicker, the ruin of traditional cultures, the importation of the shoddy, but it does not seem un-idealistic to a Punjabi peasant or a nomadic squatter from the Brazilian north-east. The first lesson that sophisticates have to learn in this domain is to respect other people's values.

Nobody has better described the conditions of development, the gains and losses that it implies, than Maurice Zinkin. His book, *Development for Free Asia*, now reprinted in a revised edition, is a classic by any standards of economic or political writing. His forte is the binding together of economic laws and human behaviour, and his humane realisation of all that must be given up if standards of living are to be raised does not allow him to forget the traditional social values to be found in, for instance, the Indian village. If, because peasants must work harder and invest productively more of the results of their labour, traditional celebrations of marriage or customary gifts of jewellery must disappear, then there is certainly a loss in terms of human values. But Mr. Zinkin knows too much about the problem to indulge in nostalgia. We may hope that some of these values will be carried on into a new industrial society, but a new industrial society must come into existence if the peasant is not to be subject to the devastation of famine and disease. Live babies are preferable to ornate jewellery and well-fed farmers to picturesque ceremonial. The future of Asia depends on peasants, who are often only half-employed, using their time more productively. They are bound to have less leisure for life's pieties as automation provides more for advanced industrial societies which have forgotten how to use it.

Mr. Zinkin is particularly good when he points out how development in Asia can only come through a total change of attitudes. Asians and Asian governments must learn to respect

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the business man whom they have hitherto (and perhaps not without reason) despised. The acquisitive thrusting, dynamic entrepreneur is not perhaps a very agreeable social phenomenon, but he is also the most efficient instrument of development and one which takes a burden off the shoulders of a hard-pressed state. Development also implies recognition of the fact that everything belongs to everything else, so that the best plans to bring it about—such as Professor Jacques Berque's Secteurs de Modernisation du Paysannat in Morocco—include welfare, education, agricultural improvement, light industry and irrigation. I could continue almost indefinitely giving instances of Mr. Zinkin's acuteness and profound knowledge. This is one book which is absolutely essential for any student of current affairs.

DR. LUCY MAIR studies the underdeveloped countries from the point of view of an anthropologist with an African bias. Her book, *New Nations,* examines the ferment at present working on African and other societies. Traditionally enclosed communities find themselves suddenly open to a wider horizon. Habits of centuries are broken down. A unitary state replaces (or tries to replace) the old loyalties of village and tribe. Indeed, one does not have to go outside Europe to see something of this process at work. Anyone who was in Poland in 1956 and 1957 will remember the terrible feeling of demoralisation in a new industrial town such as Nowa Huta where the packing of thousands of ex-peasant industrial workers into barracks without provision for amenities led to a break-down in morale that could be felt by even the passing visitor. It was no accident that it was this question of the price to be paid for an industrial revolution which was picked upon by Adam Wazyk in his *Poem for Adults*.

DR. MAIR'S is an important and interesting book, but its lessons for us in political terms are uncertain. In *The Morning After* Brian Crozier has tried to give, by means of a skilful selection of reporting and comment, a conspectus of the countries which have reached independence after freeing themselves from colonial tutelage. Since the phrase "new states" is habitually used without distinction, it is something of a relief to have someone pointing out that there are "good" and "bad" African and Asian governments, whose quality is not necessarily explained by the material they had to work on. However little the Dutch may have done towards fitting Indonesia for self-government, Dr. Soekarno is a worse national leader than President Ayub Khan. For that matter, he is worse than his rival Dr. Hatta. Patrice Lumumba was certainly more of a demagogue and less of an effective politician than Sekou Touré or Kwame Nkrumah—that was one reason why he failed.

Sooner or later everyone in the West is going to be forced to take account of the qualitative differences between African and Asian governments and statesmen. For what is at issue in the "new states" is not so much who is the most fervent anti-colonialist, as one might gather from the deliberations at Bandoeng or elsewhere. It is not even whether or not they will become Communist—if they do, they will undoubtedly wear their rue with a difference. Far more it is a question of whether or not they will slide into the sloth and anarchy punctuated by *coups d'état*, of which Latin American 19th century history provides such a dismal example. Mr. Crozier's book forces us to look at this unpleasing possibility, and both he and Mr. Zinkin perceive clearly enough that one symptom of the way things are going will be the behaviour of African and Asian governments with regard to the exterior world as manifested in such facts as foreign business communities. It is good that this point should be made. We are bound to do all we can to aid the developing

Duckworth Books

*Hothouse Bodies in a Cool Culture*
*Drink, Smoking, Cars, Violence, Frenzy*
*The Passion for Possession*
*Water Pistols and Brassières*
*Affluent Indigestion*
*Little Old Sex Technicians*
*Millennium of the Untalented*
*Parking, Petting, Necking*
*Fractured Freud*
*Gee, Officer Krupke!*

ALL ABOUT TODAY'S MAD AMERICAN TEENAGERS IS IN **Teenage Tyranny** by G. & F. HECHINGER (21/-)

3 Henrietta St. London. W.C.2

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

countries, but, human nature being what it is, that "all" will be less than it might have been, if they themselves alternate policies of begging and blackmail. It is, in fact, doing no service to the undeveloped countries to suggest that they can get away with murder, since, in world politics, no one gets away with murder over a long period. Mr. Crozier's is a hard critical look at the politics of the new states. One could wish that there were more such scrutinies.

*Anthony Hartley*

# Shaw, the Victorian

**Shaw and the Nineteenth Century Theater.** MARTIN MEISEL. O.U.P. (45s.) and Princeton.

SHAW's French translator Hamon called him the twentieth-century Molière, but if, as we tend to, we reckon the twentieth-century from 1918, Shaw's presence here was tenuous at best. After *Heartbreak House* and *Methuselah* he was at an age when men normally retire, and thenceforward he himself appeared to be a resident in the other-worldly limbo of his late plays. For Shaw was disappointed in the offspring for which his own generation had been in travail, and the twentieth century in turn refused to acknowledge its parentage, having been emancipated by Freud, Einstein, Marx, and the very war against which Shaw had campaigned so bitterly. Martin Meisel's *Shaw and the Nineteenth Century Theater* is the second recent book on Shaw to have nineteenth century in the title, and it ought to set the record straight. For such academic respectability as Shaw currently possesses is achieved at the price of regarding him, with Wilde, as a late offshoot of eighteenth-century comedy.

After a great mass of biographical sniggering it is a relief to have a book that is concerned with Shaw in his role of dramatist. Meisel's subject is important, for while Shaw, as critic of the *Saturday Review*, had to cut his way into the contemporary theatre "at the point of a pen" and "throw some of its defenders into the moat," he was nevertheless, as he confessed, "a very old-fashioned playwright" when it came to plot and construction. The plays he wrote before he achieved financial independence and dramatic maturity were all cast in traditional forms: roughly speaking the Unpleasant Plays were Ibsenite social dramas and the Pleasant Plays varieties of comedy, while Plays for Puritans utilised the conventions of melodrama. Shaw felt that the average melodrama "needs only elaboration to become a masterpiece" and backed it against the well-made play because of its moral potential, because it represented conduct "as producing swiftly and certainly on the individual the results which in actual life it only produces on the race in the course of many centuries." Meisel shows that *The Devil's Disciple* owed a debt to stage adaptations of *A Tale of Two Cities*. His point is tellingly reinforced by the collation of two illustrations, which show Sidney Carton and Dick Dudgeon in identical poses of heroic sacrifice.

Meisel follows up many of the hints in Shaw's dramatic criticism. Shaw frequently turned inside out the morality of plays that he found unsatisfactory. *John Bull's Other Island* exploded "the imaginary Irishman of Romance" in Dion Boucicault's *Colleen Bawn*—Shaw's typical Irishman is Scottish! *Mrs. Warren's Profession* was a counterblast to Pinero's *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, which Shaw detested for its pseudo-modernity. *Androcles and the Lion* was a Christian pantomime-cum-melodrama in the manner of Wilson Barrett's *The Sign of the Cross*. The sham suicide of the Archbishop in *Methuselah* is taken from *Box and Cox*.

As well as discussing Shaw's theatre-going in London, Meisel explores Shaw's acquaintanceship with the Dublin stock-companies whose productions he visited as a young man. There is an excellent chapter devoted to Shaw's knowledge of opera and its influence on the plays, particularly *Man and Superman*, which, as he might have mentioned, is almost certainly the projected comic opera referred to in Shaw's correspondence with Ellen Terry.

It is a pity that *Shaw and the Nineteenth Century Theater* is flawed as a critical study by those characteristic weaknesses of the academic mind, a fondness for schematic categorisation and a tendency to let exhaustiveness stand in place of discrimination. Boucicault's *Formosa* (a courtesan play and analogue of *Mrs. Warren*) is as much grist to the mill as *Colleen Bawn*; Tom Taylor's *Jeanne d'Arc*, whose superficial resemblance to *Saint Joan* is attributable, as he admits, "to the marshalling, by two competent playwrights, of nearly identical material into an identical form," is as relevant as his adaptation of *A Tale of Two Cities*. Such an approach inevitably involves treating Shaw as one of many nineteenth-century dramatists, correspondences between whom must necessarily have a certain documentary interest. Similarly Meisel divides Shaw's dramatic output into ten different *genres* (taking *Arms and the Man* as a melodrama, although Shaw described it as an Anti-Romantic Comedy, and creating a special category, Irish Romance, for *John Bull's Other Island*). He sees Shaw giving these *genres* a classical permanence: "He saves the uses and the energies of the mortal

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nineteenth-century popular theatre for a future classical repertory and for the living tradition." However, to try to bypass Shaw's whole critical perspective on the tradition and the intention behind his dramatic recasting is to miss the point altogether. Its dangers can be highlighted by what Shaw did to Archer's *Rhinegold*: "Laying violent hands on his thoroughly planned scheme for a sympathetically romantic 'well-made play' of the Parisian type then in vogue, I perversely distorted it into a grotesquely realistic exposure of slum landlordism, municipal jobbery, and the pecuniary and matrimonial ties between them and the pleasant people with independent means who imagine that such sordid matters do not touch their lives." Meisel is aware of the danger ("the sagacious critic who would simply equate the Shavian drama with its antecedents is a figure of fun") but I am not altogether certain that he avoids it. It is odd too that he does not refer to Shaw's acknowledgement of specific debts in the Preface to *Three Plays for Puritans*, the harlequinade and the forgotten farces such as *Cool as a Cucumber* and *Used Up*, in which "the imperturbably impudent comedian, afterwards shelved by the reaction to brainless sentimentality, was a stock figure."

TO BEGIN WITH Shaw poured new wine in old bottles but in *Cæsar* and *Brassbound* the bottles began to crack under the strain. He solved the problem in *Man and Superman* by putting the central discussion into a separate detachable act, but in so doing he had moved towards the creation of forms of his own in which neither morality nor action was ready-made. Meisel's last two categories, the Discussion Play and the Extravaganza, are of quite another order from the rest. They are characteristically Shavian (the Extravaganza has something in common with Gilbert's comedies but "Gilbertian" in Shaw's vocabulary was always a term of depreciation) and they are his contribution to the transformation of the drama in this century. Shaw was aware of this technical aspect. In the chapter "The Technical Novelty in Ibsen's Plays" added to *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, he wrote that, "We now have plays, including some of my own, which begin with discussion and end with action, and others in which the discussion interpenetrates the action from beginning to end."

The disassociation of sensibility in the nineteenth century, the hiving-off of the imagination from the facts of ordinary existence, resulted in an altogether too uncritical relationship between art and reality. The novel was too literal, the theatre too sham. ("Stage kings and queens, stage lovers, stage tyrants, stage parents, stage villains and stage heroes were alone to be found in it.") Poetry became a realm of dreams, a place of escape. Keats always came back from his journeys on the "viewless wings of Poesy," but Morris and Tennyson conjured up imaginative worlds where it was possible to dwell permanently.

James and Conrad reinvigorated the novel by handling their material much more warily, using the restricted awareness of Western Eyes or of Lambert Strether to imbue the experience with a strange, reverential otherness. Shaw lacked this sense of otherness. Walkley said that Shaw believed that everybody was like himself, and when he was once asked by a lady how he managed to display such a penetrating insight into the feminine psyche, he replied that he just imagined what he would have done in the same circumstances. To some extent this was a debilitating weakness, but it was also a source of strength. The basic inspiration of the modern theatre was to strip off the masks of time, place, character, and class, and to show that under the skin everything was very much the same. Cocteau's Thebes is not very different from modern Paris; as *Cæsar and Cleopatra* begins, a guardsman has just finished telling a naughty story "still current in English barracks;" in

BORIS PASTENAK
**Fifty Poems**
Poems from every period of Pasternak's life; selected and translated by his younger sister Lydia Pasternak Slater. *Cloth* 10s 6d *Paper* 5s

ARTHUR WALEY
**The Secret History of the Monguls**
**AND OTHER PIECES**
Recent articles, broadcasts and translations, many of which have never previously been published. 32s

ERNEST LINDGREN
**The Art of the Film**
This new edition brings up to date one of the most comprehensive studies of film criticism and technique ever produced. *Illustrated* 30s

**Allen & Unwin**

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pirandello's *Henry IV* the fictitious past is as real as the present. Shaw, Cocteau, and Pirandello accept the unreality of the stage (Cocteau's Oedipus is a "cardboard king," Shaw's Sergius is an "operatic tenor," the passion of the Father in *Six Characters in Search of an Author* "becomes a trifle theatrical when it is exalted") and use it to place the two different worlds of illusion and reality in ironic and ambivalent juxtaposition. As Shaw put it: "Nothing is more significant than the statement that 'all the world's a stage.' The whole world is ruled by theatrical illusion.... The case is not one of fanciful similitude but of identity."

Shaw abandoned melodrama for the discussion drama because he could no longer believe in the significance of human action. Faced with the dispiriting doctrines of Darwinism he had first snatched at what hope he could: at Henry George, at Butler, at the creed salvaged from *An Enemy of the People* of marching forward "at the heels of the strongest man." He began by believing Hyndman when he said that there would be a revolution in 1889. But as Fabianism, which Shaw backed partly because it was middle class, partly because it was practical, began to peter out in what Hyndman called "Gas and Water Socialism," and ran into formidable obstacles even in respect of these restricted aims, he lost all faith in the ability of man to change society or control his destiny. His crucial image becomes a ship drifting out of control. Lady Cecily momentarily takes away the confidence that Captain Brassbound had in himself: "I wasn't unhappy, because I wasn't drifting. I was steering a course and had work in hand. Give a man health and a course to steer; and he'll never stop to trouble about whether he's happy or not." Lady Cecily tells him that there is only one thing to be done with Idealists like him—"Marry them straight off to some girl with enough money for them and plenty of sentiment." Brassbound recovers his "secret of command" but in the next play, *Man and Superman*, Tanner is married off to a pretty girl, and in the dialogue in Hell Don Juan says hopefully, "To be in hell is to drift: to be in heaven is to steer." The Devil replies, "On the rocks most likely"; and after the drifting of *Heartbreak House* Shaw saw society as headed just there. In *On the Rocks* Sir Arthur Chavender's wife says: "You don't govern the country, Arthur. The country isn't governed: it just slummocks along anyhow." Chavender replies, "I have to govern within democratic limits. I cannot go faster than our voters allow me." Shaw is our most penetrating critic of democracy. As the twentieth century develops we can see its kinship with the nineteenth more clearly, and begin to be aware of the dangers of drifting thoughtlessly along with the tide of economic forces. We also see that the tragedy of Kennedy's death was not just that he died but that he was able to achieve so little. But Shaw's vision of man adrift is not only a critique of democracy, it is also a vision of tragedy: "the tragedy of modern life is that nothing happens, and that the resultant dullness does not kill."

The cruellest blow of Natural Selection was to destroy the myth of a Paradise Lost. Shaw, like many of his contemporaries, was a Utopian because if there has been no Paradise in the past it must be located in the future. Shaw, like his fellow-Socialist Brecht, is a deeply pessimistic writer because he begins by distrusting society and human institutions and ends by distrusting humanity. At the end of *The Good Person of Setzuan* comes the question, "Should men be better? Should the world be changed?" and the answer is not necessarily the latter. *Saint Joan* and *Mother Courage* are grim chronicles of human stupidity. Brecht leaves you to it, but Shaw, the religious writer, goes on doggedly hoping for something better.

*David Morse*

# Rags & Riches

**Radcliffe.** By David Storey. *Longmans*, 21s.

**The Ragman's Daughter.** By Alan Sillitoe. *W. H. Allen*, 16s.

**A God and his Gifts.** By I. Compton-Burnett. *Gollancz*, 18s.

I wonder how much David Storey had *Wuthering Heights* in mind when writing *Radcliffe*. There is no missing the parallels, in this story of a passion without concessions, and with no place in the world, growing savage in its baffled efforts to create one. It obviously has the same kind of dualistic vision: the same rage against the barriers of the body, the same going and coming between two symbolic houses, and the same flowering of a later passion from an original sense of social injury (the working-class boy's resentment of the great house, and his desertion by his friend, when the latter goes on to the grammar school). In Storey's tale the roles of Heathcliff and Cathy are reversed. Of the two homosexual lovers who correspond to them, it is Leonard, the effete product of a decayed upper-class family, predestined to neurosis by his father's social declension and self-imposed isolation, who represents the heroic consciousness; and it is Tolson, Leonard's working-class lover, the supposedly untainted source of vital energy, who has to be carried by

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Leonard's strength, and who continually backslides, at last fatally.

Their first sexual encounter is more significant than Leonard realises. They have met again, some years after schooldays, as labourers in the same construction-gang; and while employed erecting marquees for a local show, they spend some nights together in a tent. Tolson takes Leonard to bed with him offhandedly, and next day doesn't seem to want to acknowledge the fact. He goes off with the local tart, gets up in the middle of the night to wreck the show-ground, and goes home to his wife. Leonard assumes at first that Tolson is merely ashamed of his homosexuality, but he soon learns that it is more than that. Homosexuality has brought out sadism in Tolson; he enjoys humiliating and dominating. He must make Leonard eat his shit. He farts and pisses on the floor of the room where they have been making love. He finally commits the most violent rape on Leonard that he can conceive.

Leonard knows quite unquestionably that their love is good (he is a brilliantly conceived character; with a high I.Q. he is to all intents and purposes an imbecile without sexual love) but he is altogether alone. The people round him are either merely out of all touch with life (like his father) or hardened against it. His uncle Austen, the antique-dealer, a dandy and reputed rake but a repressed homosexual, positively desires the affair to end in destruction. He has become a connoisseur of suffering and degradation. It was he who engineered the affair in the first place, as a deliberately Satanic act. And linking Austen to Tolson there is the married homosexual Blakeley, one of Austen's "finds" and of Tolson's victims, a red-nosed club entertainer, whose repulsive comic patter represents pure life-hatred.

The odds are too great, and Leonard murders Tolson. (His method is entirely characteristic of him. He hits Tolson on the head again and again with a hammer, killing him by the mere repetition of his blows. *He will not let him alone.*) He then reverts into imbecility and is sent at last to a mental home, where he becomes "a bearded, Christ-like madman, continually soliciting the other inmates, crying 'Love!'"

There hasn't been an English novel of such force and originality for a long time. One of the striking features of it is Storey's way of giving reality to the concept "society" by his handling of crowd-scenes. When society comes on the scene of Leonard and Tolson's first love-making, it immediately smells what has happened—a phrase which gets a literal meaning, when the latrine-buckets are overturned and a pool of ordure begins to spread over the field, and a further one from the fact that shit, literally as well as metaphorically, is what the incident means to some of the onlookers. "What've you been doing the last few days, then?" says one of Leonard's work-mates (the one who overturned the buckets). "Stuffing it into old Tolson's chocolate box? Rooting it about amongst the raspberry creams?" Storey makes the scene pictorially expressive by all sorts of cinematic touches—the uncertain movement of the crowd as it is drawn towards the stinking pool; the way the contractor tries to convey apology by standing at a distance from the pool. Storey has found a way (which the writer of conventional "homosexual novels" always fails to) of actualising that society whose laws are being violated. It is significant of Storey's method, by the way, that he shows us Leonard himself from the outside only, and as it were cinematically. Leonard "seems" to be doing such and such; he acts "as if" he were feeling so and so.

The book has some weaknesses. The allegory —what shall be the destiny of the beleaguered great house (*i.e.*, the mind, and historic culture)? Can it come to terms with the housing estate (*i.e.*, body and mass-society)?—is a rich one, though I haven't space to follow it out. But in the later part of the novel the *peripeteia* happen so patly, characters are shunted into place so high-handedly in the cause of epiphanic tableaux, that one starts to think one is in a novel by Iris Murdoch. Similarly, the weather is put to service like a stage-machine. The prose, moreover, though often admirably sinewy, sometimes (like Emily Brontë's) starts to take on the overheated quality of the Gothic novelist's.

More serious, Blakeley, the life-denying comedian and dirty-joker, seems too crudely taken over from *The Entertainer*, and moreover has been given an intellectuality and articulateness that is not properly accounted for. Storey wants to get this particular attitude in—the underdog sexual and social role, turning to life-hatred and fascism—but he hasn't bothered to embody it credibly. It is an endearing touch (it's the one real joke in the book) that Blakeley's will should terminate in "a simple but extremely articulate appeal for the strengthening and preservation of the monarchy, and for greater support for the unification of the churches," but all the same this freakish detail points to something odd and erratic in Storey's attitude to the reader.

ALAN SILLITOE's stories make a very quiet impression after *Radcliffe*. And indeed I tend to think Sillitoe, though a genuine writer, a very limited one, and in an old-fashioned vein. His theme is largely summed up in this quotation:



PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> We played a game for a long time in our street, where a gang of boys held fag-lighters in a fair wind, flicking them on and off and seeing which light stayed on longest.... This game was all the rage for weeks, before we got fed up, or our lighters did, I forget which. Sooner or later every lighter goes out....

His stories are generally about adjustment—about what you do when the lighter goes out, or about the secret strategy you may perform to keep it just flickering. But the sad law behind them is: if you're working class, you've had it when you're middle-aged. The true heroes of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* were Aunt Ada's boys, the wild denizens of the working-class jungle, who spent their war in the glasshouse and who tunnelled next door for their liquor. Similarly, the most deeply felt story in *The Ragman's Daughter* is the title one, about a young man's three months of inextinguishable glory, spent thieving with a girl-friend—after which there was to be nothing else in his life. And though the boy himself voices leftist sentiments—he says he would like to live somewhere where there was no thieving and everyone owned as much as everyone else—we don't believe him. The weight of the story, and of Sillitoe's own basically tory-anarchist, anti-welfare-state attitude, is against him.

The stories often hark back to the war. If you had something good in the war, you hang on to it, for good or evil. The war-time morse-code speed king spends his pool winnings on a short-wave receiver like the one he used in Egypt, and tries to find a refuge in it when his marriage starts going wrong.

This vision of Sillitoe's is an authentic one, and *The Ragman's Daughter* and *The Magic Box* are genuinely touching stories. His distinction, such as it is, all lies in this vision. The actual writing is really rather shoddy. The cooked-up vigorousness of the following is typical:

> The man on the gate took me to the turnery. The noise hit me like a boxing-glove as I went in, but I kept on walking straight into it without flinching, feeling it reach right into my guts as if to wrench them out and use them as garters.

He tries to evolve a "pop" rhetoric, but it doesn't come off. And he tends to show that he is not very much in the skin of a character by making him say about himself what only the author would be aware of.

IF ALAN SILLITOE writes about adjustments to life, and David Storey about dictating one's own terms to it, Ivy Compton-Burnett does not write about Life at all. She is peculiar in not paying homage to that sacred unity, so eloquently invoked by Virginia Woolf and Henry James, and respected loyally, as if according to their Hippocratic oath, by most novelists. It is the unspoken assumption of almost all novels that, however specialised in range or treatment, they stand for the whole of existence. You could fit the rest in. With Miss Compton-Burnett many things—landscape, the quality of physical existence—just wouldn't fit in. She uses plot and character to provide a scenario, but only in the interests of her dialectic. If something fruitful turns up in this dialectic, she, like Socrates, will "work" it to whatever length it needs. Her scenarios have certain fixed elements. There are two kinds of character, those who live within clichés and those who live outside them. There is likely to be a full-blown self-deceiver, usually the head of the house; a fool, usually a woman, to speak in clichés; and a jury of truth-tellers (always including the children) to work on the clichés, blowing them up, turning them over, grinding them down. It is a process of reduction: the speaker makes a self-conscious remark, overhears himself, and retreats to a further remove of self-consciousness.

This is not to say that the plot has no significance. Only that it is generally the same significance. There is an exchange in *Brothers and Sisters* which catches it precisely. Robin and his sister are discussing the recent revelation that their father and mother are half-brother and sister. "Could this happen to anyone but us?" says Robin. "It has not happened to us. It has made us," Dinah replies. Ivy Compton-Burnett's logic-chopping mind is perpetually fascinated by the fact that a casual and perhaps forgotten action may—it is so unlike the way syllogisms behave—lead to the existence of a whole new person.

Her new novel leans a good deal on this theme. The "God" of its title is the novelist Hereward, who has endowed the world with an excess of gifts: two illegitimate children, as well as three legitimate ones and numerous novels. Only a god, his children decide, could survive having his infidelities shown up quite so frequently. And as we guess from the discussion on novel-writing (it is the funniest bit of the book. The family take a very low view indeed of novel-writing. All that the butler Galleon can say for it is that, "it does not involve anything manual") the author sees any creation of life, whether in the form of bastards or of novels, as potentially god-like. Unfortunately this new book is the poorest of her gifts (it is pretty dull in parts), and the best one can do with it is to collect the few good fragments and add them to the one, eternal Compton-Burnett novel.

*P. N. Furbank*

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# FROM THE OTHER SHORE

## Lenin and Inessa Armand

IN 1924, immediately after Lenin died, the Central Committee of his party called upon all who had a shred of writing from his hand to deposit it in the party's archives. The holders hastened to comply. All his letters were ostensibly published in three substantial volumes, supplemented by items in a number of "Miscellany" (*Sbornik*) volumes. Not one letter to or from Inessa Armand appeared in that flood of Leniniana.

On February 27, 1939, Krupskaya died. Four months after her death, *Bolshevik* (No. 13, July, 1939) published the first of two letters from Lenin to Inessa on the "woman question." The letters were not so much an expression of Lenin's views as a comment on Inessa Armand's. Planning in the course of her Bolshevik work with "working women" to write a brochure addressed to them, Inessa had dutifully submitted her outline to Lenin. Among her programmatic demands for woman's rights she included "free love." The Marx-Lenin Institute has not chosen to publish any of her letters to Lenin, although from a French Communist, Jean Fréville, who was permitted to consult her letters to Lenin when writing an authorised biography of Inessa, we know that the Institute has them.[1] Something of the nature of her plan, however, we can glean from Lenin's letter concerning it, in which he quotes hers. But first we must consider his letters to Inessa Armand as a whole.[2]

THE FIRST THING that strikes the Russian reader of Lenin's letters to Inessa is the use of the intimate pronoun *ty* in addressing her, in place of the usual polite second person pronoun *vy*. To the English-speaking reader it is hard to convey how unusual, and how intimate, it is for an educated Russian to address a woman as *ty*. Or for that matter to address another man thus, unless they were childhood intimates, companions from youth, members of the same family, or much closer to each other than adult friends and socialist comrades. In all the 600-odd published letters of Lenin, except for his mother, his two sisters, and his wife, Inessa is the only woman to whom he ever wrote *ty*. Only two men ever received a letter with the intimate personal address. Both were comrades of his youth, one being Martov, for whom, as Krupskaya testifies in her *Memories of Lenin*, he felt a lifelong attachment.[3] Yet there is only one letter extant in which he wrote *ty* to Martov. After their first political disagreement, he never again addressed him except as *vy*. The other was Krzhizhanovsky, who in the nineties lived near him as a fellow exile in distant Siberia along the Yenisei, for weeks on end sharing with him the same cabin. With Krzhizhanovsky, too, after the latter crossed him once in politics, though he afterwards returned to unquestioning discipleship, Lenin never again used anything but *vy*.

Neither Krassin, who made his bombs in 1905 and became his Commissar of Trade in 1918, nor Bogdanov, who was his chief lieutenant after the

[1] The principal sources of information on Inessa Armand used in the present article are: Krupskaya's references to her in *Vospominaniya o Lenine* (Moscow, 1957); the reminiscences of Krupskaya and others in *Pamyati Inessy Armand: Sbornik pod redaktsiei N. K. Krupskoi* (Moscow, 1926); the letters of Lenin to Inessa as published in censored form in *Sochineniya* (4th ed.; Moscow, 1941–52), XXXV; reminiscences of Angelica Balabanoff communicated orally to the writer; reminiscences of Marcel Body, who was recounting both what he himself knew (he was a member of the League of French Communists in Russia formed by her in 1918), what Alexandra Kollontay told him (he was an aide in her embassy and her confidant for many years), which he later published, and matters communicated by him in a letter to the writer; *Inessa Armand: Une Grande Figure de la Révolution Russe* (Paris, 1957) by Jean Fréville, who was permitted to examine materials concerning her in the archives of the Marx-Lenin Institute (he has refrained from quoting, or was forbidden to quote, any key passages from her letters to Lenin, although he makes it clear that he was permitted to read them; his book is more pious hagiography than biography); an obituary notice in *Pravda* on the occasion of Inessa's death, signed by Krupskaya; an article on her in *Bol'shaya sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*; a discussion of her relations with Lenin in N. Valentinov, *Vstrechi c Leninym* (New York, 1953), Gérard Walter, *Lénine* (Paris, 1950). These various accounts contain some discrepancies, many reticences, in some cases palpable inaccuracies. For example, most of the accounts give the first name as Inessa, not Elizabeth, omit her maiden name or give it wrongly as Petrova, Petrovna, and Stephanie, and set her date of birth as 1875 instead of 1879. Gérard Walter has examined the original French documentary sources to establish her first name, father's name, maiden name, real age, and so forth, using among other documents Lyonnet's *Dictionnaire des Comédiens français*, which gives biographical data on her father in Vol. II, p. 513.

[2] In 1952, 24 letters to Inessa were published in Vol. 35 of Lenin's *Sochineniya*.

[3] This is testified to by every mention of Martov in the two volumes of Krupskaya's *Vospominaniya* and by M. Gorky, *V. I. Lenin* (Moscow, 1931), p. 43. Krupskaya relates that when Lenin felt his end was near, one of his last utterances was a mournful query: "They say that Martov is dying, too!"

BERTRAM D. WOLFE *is a well-known American scholar on Russian affairs and is the author of "Three Who Made a Revolution," "Communist Totalitarianism," and other works.*



PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

break with *Iskra*, nor Zinoviev, who held the same place from 1908 to 1917, nor Bukharin, whom he called the "darling of the party," nor Sverdlov nor Stalin, who each in turn became his chief organisation man, ever received a letter that used the intimate pronoun. Sparing as most educated Russians are in the use of *ty* with each other, Lenin was even more so than most, always maintaining a subtle distance between himself and the closest and most useful of his disciples. Nor, to mention the women who served him longest and most faithfully and for whose work he was most grateful, did he ever write *ty* to Stasova, Ludmila Stal, Liliana Zinoviev, Alexandra Kollontay, or Angelica Balabanoff. Any of them would have been astonished had he done so.

In the letters to Inessa Armand, too, there is a sudden change from *ty* to *vy*, but not out of cooling friendship or disagreement. In his first published letter to Inessa Armand Lenin uses the intimate form, and he continues to do so until the day war is declared. Then, with wartime censors opening letters on every frontier, he drops the telltale *ty* for the more formal *vy*, for Lenin was conspirative even in this. Otherwise there is no change in tone.

INESSA ARMAND was a dedicated, romantic heroine, who seemed to come out of the pages of Chernyshevsky's *What Is To Be Done?*—Lenin's favourite revolutionary novel as it was Inessa's. Indeed, Chernyshevsky's novel was the chief instrument of the conversion of Inessa to socialism. The true story of her life has been obscured by the accounts of those who did not know her intimately, and by an understandable reticence on the part of those who did. The sketch of her in the *Bol'shaya sovetskaya entsiklopediya* is meagre, omits what is most important in her career, and is mistaken even as to the date of her birth and true name.

The Encyclopædia gives her birth date as 1875, her name as Inessa Fedorovna (*i.e.*, Inessa, daughter of Fedor), and her maiden name as Stephanie. Actually, she was born in Paris in 1879, of a French father and a Scottish mother, both music hall artistes, and was christened Elizabeth d'Herbenville. The Inessa by which she came exclusively to be known was the name she assumed in Russia for party work. So much did she become known by it (though she sometimes used the pseudonym Blonina instead) that when she died, the obituary written by Krupskaya for *Pravda* was headed with the single word: "INESSA." The maiden name Stephanie given her in the Encyclopædia is an obvious misunderstanding of her father's stage name, for in the French theatre he was billed as Stéphen. The name Petrova or Petrovna, given by some sources, is the pseudonym she used when she appeared in Brussels on Lenin's behalf in July, 1914, to defy the International Socialist Bureau, which was trying to unify the Russian socialist movement. It was as Comrade Petrova that she delivered in French the speech Lenin had written for her; it was as Petrova that the police agent present reported on her. It was an appropriate name, for it is derived from *petra*, "rock," and signifies that she, as a good Leninist, was "rock hard" and would stand up against all the great men of the International, firm as a rock.

HER CHILDHOOD was that of a daughter of people of the theatre. Her father, Pécheux d'Herbenville, was a comedian and singer, known on the stage as Stéphen. Her mother sang in French and gave singing and piano lessons. As a child Inessa learned to speak both her native French and her mother's English tongue with equal fluency. The world of music and the stage was her home. When her father died and her mother could no longer support three fatherless children by teaching or music hall work, the girl, Elizabeth, was taken to Russia by a French aunt and her English maternal grandmother, both of whom secured positions, as was the fashion of the day, tutoring in French and English respectively the children of a wealthy Russian industrialist of French descent, Evgenii Armand, a textile manufacturer in Pushkino, thirty miles from Moscow. Here the young girl grew up in a family with liberal views. She was accepted on an equal footing with the children of the Armand family.

At fourteen she too was provided with a tutor, who turned out to be a man of advanced, perhaps revolutionary, ideas. These she did not understand, but they excited her imagination. She mastered Russian, was introduced into the Orthodox Church, and shared the interests that prevailed in educated circles in the closing years of 19th-century Russia. By now she spoke faultless German and Russian as well as French and English—polyglot talents that would make her invaluable to Lenin. Her aunt, who had been a teacher of singing and piano, taught her to be a virtuoso at the piano, another talent that Lenin was to prize. At eighteen she married Alexander Evgenevich Armand, the manufacturer's second son, slightly older than she. The couple moved to the nearby estate of the Armands at Eldigino, and later to Moscow. She lived with her husband for many quiet, apparently happy years, bearing him five children, three boys and two girls. But this substantial family, in the words of Krupskaya's memoir, "did not prevent her from going her own path all the same, and becoming a revolutionary Bolshevik."

It was her husband's older brother, Boris Evgenevich, who by word and example first steered her course towards "advanced ideas." He took the side of the working-men in his father's factory, tried to organise them, and was questioned by the police when they traced to him the ownership of a mimeograph machine on which his unsigned leaflets were being reproduced. It was most likely he who put into his sister-in-law's hands Chernyshevsky's novel, *Chto delat'?*, on whose utopian heroes and heroine, Vera Pavlovna, Inessa sought to model her own life.[4]

[4] A common bond between Lenin and Inessa Armand on their first meeting was their shared admiration for Chernyshevsky's novel. This novel, which took the Russian intelligentsia by storm with its image of the "new men," also contained a "new woman," its heroine, Vera Pavlovna. The American anarchist Benjamin Tucker, who translated it into English, wrote of the novel in a preface to a New York edition (1909): "The fundamental idea is that woman is a human being and not an animal created

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LIKE SO MANY IDEALISTIC women of her generation, Inessa was not content with the sheltered career of wife and mother. Like her heroine, she too wanted to be "socially useful," to help the less fortunate members of her sex. She tried running the farm on her husband's estate, then teaching and doing works of charity. In time, the problem of prostitution became her obsession. She sought to redeem these unhappy women from their life of degradation, but was shocked to find them suspicious, unashamed, unwilling to be "redeemed." Since one of her sources of inspiration was Leo Tolstoy, she went to this fountainhead of wisdom for counsel. His answer ("Nothing will come of your work. It was so before Moses, it was so after Moses. So it was, so it will be.") turned her away from Tolstoyanism to a more exclusive dedication to Chernyshevsky. She would imitate Vera Pavlovna and her "uncommon" friends and tutors in their efforts to transform the structure of society. Thus she would put an end, she thought, to the hateful institution which had existed before Moses and which neither the Laws given to Moses nor the coming of Christ had been able to change.

---

for man's benefit, and its chief purpose is to show the superiority of free unions between men and women over the indissoluble marriage sanctioned by the Church and State."

If Lenin was attracted by the vision of the "uncommon men" and their "rigorist" leader concerning utopia, Inessa was attracted by the deeds and views of the novel's heroine. Krupskaya wrote: "Inessa was moved to socialism by the image of woman's rights and freedom in *What Is To Be Done?*" Like the heroine, she broke her ties with one man to live with another, concerned herself with good deeds to redeem the poor female and the prostitute, tried to solve the problems of woman's too servile place in society. Indeed, whole generations of Russian radicals were influenced by Chernyshevsky's many-sided utopian novel and were moved to imitate its "uncommon men and women."

Just as Marx could be the spiritual ancestor of people as various as Bernstein, Kautsky, Bebel, and Luxemburg, so Chernyshevsky was a formative influence for the two men who in their persons incarnated the two opposing poles of socialism in 1917: Tsereteli and Lenin. If Inessa found in the novel her image of woman's rights and freedom in love, and Lenin the prototypes of his vanguard and his leadership, Tsereteli found there his ideal of service to the people. Men who are big enough to have spiritual progeny are likely to be thus many-sided and complicated, while each "descendant" finds in his "ancestor" that which enlarges and reinforces what already exists in him.

[5] The one exception is Angelica Balabanoff, who got to know her five years later through their joint work in the Zimmerwald and Kienthal wartime conferences, and the International Woman's and Youth's meetings. Dr. Balabanoff told me: "I did not warm to Inessa. She was pedantic, a one hundred per cent. Bolshevik in the way she dressed (always in the same severe style), in the way she thought, and spoke. She spoke a number of languages, and in all of them repeated Lenin verbatim."

It was with "the woman problem in its relation to socialism" that she concerned herself for the rest of her life. She left husband and children, apparently without bitter scenes or rancour (just as Vera Pavlovna left Lopukhov). Later she sent for her two youngest to live with her abroad. But unlike her model, who was eager to earn her own way, Inessa continued to receive support from her husband all her life—until Lenin's seizure of power put an end to the fortune of the Armands in Russia.

IN 1904 AT THE AGE of twenty-five, Inessa made her final break with her husband (they sometimes met as friends as occasion permitted thereafter), and went to Sweden to study feminism at the feet of Ellen Key. In Stockholm's Russian colony she got to know of Lenin's *Chto delat'?*, a title that reverberated in her spirit. In his organisational principles, his doctrine of the élite or vanguard, his hard line, she must have felt an echo of Rakhmetov, the "rigorist" of Chernyshevsky's novel. Thus before she met Lenin, she became his admirer and a Leninist.

An organising mission for the Bolsheviks sent her back to Russia, where she landed almost immediately in prison, on January 6th, 1905. The October Manifesto of the Tsar, promising freedom and a constitution, contained an amnesty provision for politicals which released her. On April 9th, 1907, she was arrested a second time for Bolshevik activities in the armed forces. Her husband furnished bail, but she landed in jail once more while awaiting trial, and from jail was deported by administrative order to Archangel Province in Russia's far north for a two-year period. She managed to flee abroad before her term was quite over.

Early in 1910 she went to Paris where she first got to know the Ulianovs. Lenin, Zinoviev, and Kamenev (then the *troika*) had just moved to Paris in December, 1909. The leading Menshevik exiles were there too, and many Socialist Revolutionaries, so that Paris possessed a big Russian colony, in which Inessa soon assumed a leading position. She came with her two youngest children, a boy, André, and a girl, Ina. "She was a very ardent Bolshevik," writes Krupskaya, "and soon gathered our Paris crowd around her."

THOSE WHO KNEW HER THEN remember her somewhat asymmetrical face, unruly, dark chestnut hair, great hypnotic eyes, and inextinguishable ardour of spirit. She had a wider culture than any other woman in Lenin's circle (at least until Kollontay became an adherent of his during the war), a deep love of music, above all of Beethoven, who became Lenin's favourite too. She played the piano like a virtuoso, was fluent in five languages, was enormously serious about Bolshevism and work among women, and possessed personal charm and an intense love of life to which almost all who wrote of her testify.[5] When Lenin met her, she had just turned thirty.

IN THE COURSE of his factional war with the *Vperyodist* Bolsheviks, who had set up a party school in Gorky's home in Capri, Lenin rejected their invitation to teach, promoted (unwittingly

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

aided by a police agent) a split in their student body, and opened a rival school in Longjumeau, near Paris. Inessa rented a large building there and set up lodgings and a dining-room for the students. The Ulianovs dined there too. As a rare mark of Lenin's confidence, she was permitted to alternate with him in the course on political economy. The rest of the faculty were Zinoviev and Kamenev. No other Bolshevik woman had ever been so honoured.

The Ulianovs generally held everyone at arm's length, with Krupskaya as self-appointed guardian to see that Lenin's work and privacy were not interfered with. But by 1911 it had become obvious to the little circle of Russian émigrés that Inessa had somehow breached the barrier: "He was often seen with her at a café on the Avenue d'Orléans.... It struck even so unobservant a person as the French Socialist-Bolshevik, Charles Rappaport. Lenin, he wrote, *"avec ses petits yeux mongols épiait toujours cette petite française...."*

THE ULIANOVS now moved to 4, Rue Marie-Rose, and Inessa and her children to Number 2 of the same street. (The houses are still standing, in good condition, with a plaque outside Number 4 telling the passer-by that Lenin once lived there.) "The house grew brighter when Inessa entered it," Krupskaya was to write six years after Inessa's death.

In 1912 Lenin completed the final split in the Social Democratic Party by designating his Bolshevik conference in Prague an official party congress, and declaring Martov, Axelrod, Plekhanov, Trotsky, and their followers "outside the party" until they submitted to his "Congress." He moved to Krakow, in Austrian Poland, to be nearer St. Petersburg, where the legal daily *Pravda* now began to appear. To line up the underground inside Russia, he sent Inessa, who had also moved to Krakow, on a clandestine tour of Russia. There were so many police agents in his underground now that almost immediately she landed in prison once more. When she developed signs of tuberculosis in jail, her husband managed to get her out on bail after a year in prison. She immediately rejoined Lenin and his wife in Krakow and in Poronin in the Tatra Mountains.

> We were terribly glad ... at her arrival.... In the autumn [of 1913] all of us became very close to Inessa. In her there was much joy of life and ardour. We had known Inessa in Paris, but there was a large colony there. In Krakow lived a small closely knit circle of comrades. Inessa rented a room in the same family with which Kamenev lived.
>
> My mother became closely attached to Inessa. Inessa often went to talk with her, sit with her, have a smoke with her. It became cosier and gayer when Inessa came. Our entire life was filled with party concerns and affairs, more like a student commune than like family life, and we were glad to have Inessa.... Something warm radiated from her talk.
>
> Il'ich, Inessa, and I often went on walks together. Zinoviev and Kamenev dubbed us the "hikers" party. We walked in the meadows on the outskirts of the city. Meadow in Polish is *blon*, and Inessa from then on took the pseudonym of *Blonina*. Inessa was a good musician, urged us all to go to Beethoven concerts, and played very well many of Beethoven's pieces. Il'ich especially loved *Sonate Pathétique*, constantly begging her to play it.

In 1921, when Lenin had taken power and Inessa was dead, one day he said to Gorky:

> I know nothing that is greater than the *Appassionata*: I am ready to listen to it every day. It is amazing, more than human, music. I want to say gentle stupidities and stroke the heads of people who, living in this dirty hell, can create such beauty. But to-day you must not stroke the head of anyone—they will bite your hand. It is necessary to beat them over the head, beat without mercy, even though in our ideal we are against the use of force against people. Hm-hm, duty is hellishly hard![6]

It was this side of Lenin's nature—the side which he strove mightily, and on the whole successfully, to restrain—that Inessa ministered to. The gentleness she evoked in him (the desire to say gentle stupidities and stroke the heads of people) is reflected in his letters to her, despite the censorship to which they have been subjected, reflected even in letters arguing with her when she has disagreed and pressed her point hard.

LIFE IN KRAKOW proved too cramping for Inessa's overflowing energies. She made a tour of the Bolshevik exile colonies, lecturing on the woman question, and then returned to her native Paris, where the main Bolshevik group abroad was settled.

At the beginning of January, 1914, Lenin stopped over in Paris with Duma Deputy (and police agent) Malinovsky, when they were on their way to address a Lettish Congress in Brussels. He returned to Paris alone, spending a month and a half in the French capital. To his mother he wrote on February 21st: "I have just been in Paris, not a bad trip. Paris is not a good city to live in with modest means, and quite an exhausting one. But to be there a little while, to visit, to wander about a bit—there's not a better nor a gayer city. It refreshed me greatly."

No letter of Lenin's ever suggested a happier, more relaxed mood.

It was while Inessa was living in Paris and the Ulianovs were in Krakow, that Lenin's first letter to her was written. The published version has been censored and lacks salutation and closing and all personal touches. His last letter to her is dated in his works as "written between the 25th and the 31st of March, 1917," that is, after the February Revolution had begun, and both Inessa and Lenin were getting ready to go to Russia. She was one of the eighteen Bolsheviks who accompanied him across Germany to Russia in the "sealed train" that enabled them to reach Petrograd on April 16th, 1917.

[6] *Lenin i Gorky: Pis'ma* ... (Moscow, 1958), pp. 251–52. An English translation is in Maxim Gorky, *Days with Lenin* (New York, 1932), p. 52.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DURING THE WAR Lenin wrote more letters to Inessa Armand than to any other person, whether relative or disciple. As soon as he got out of prison in Austria and reached a safe haven in Berne, Switzerland, he wrote to Inessa, who because of her lung ailment was living in the Swiss Alps at Les Avants. Except for the first two sentences, Lenin writes this time as best he can in English. He tells Inessa of the need to gather materials on the war positions of all parties, then asks about her health, whether she eats better, whether she has books and newspapers, how the weather is in Les Avants, whether she is taking walks, and whether they can see each other soon. The letter must have been written after September 6th. "Towards the middle of September," according to her official biographer, Inessa moved to Berne. Thereafter there were no letters to Inessa for the rest of the autumn. A passage in Krupskaya's memoirs explains why:

> The memory of that autumn is interwoven in my mind with the autumnal scene in the forest in Berne. The autumn of that year was a glorious one. We lived in Berne on a small, neat, quiet street bordering on the Berne Forest.... Catercorner across the road lived Inessa [the street was Distelweg].... We would wander for hours along the forest roads covered with fallen yellow leaves. Generally the three of us went together on these walks, Vladimir Il'ich, Inessa, and I. . . . Sometimes we would sit for hours on the sunlit, wooded mountainside, while Il'ich jotted down outlines of his speeches and articles.... I would study Italian... Inessa would sew a skirt and bask with delight in the autumnal sun....

As soon as Inessa left Berne, Lenin resumed writing to her. The twenty-four letters to her in the fourth edition of his works show that during the war years Lenin wrote more frequently and at greater length to her than to anyone else. In the brief period from November 20th, 1916, to the outbreak of the February Revolution in 1917, he wrote fourteen letters to her, two brief notes to his younger sister, one to his older sister's husband, and four to other persons—in short, more to her than to all the rest put together. In his letters to Inessa, as always, preoccupation with politics is uppermost. But tone and depth reveal facets of his nature exhibited in no other letters, whether to members of his family or to other disciples. Most important to us are the letters examined by me elsewhere on Lenin's attitude towards war and national defence. Here we will look only at those which throw light on other aspects of Lenin's spirit.

Unlike the letters to other intimates of the Ulianovs, there are in the letters to Inessa no mention of Krupskaya, no regards from her, nor any personal note added by her. Only after Lenin has been writing to Inessa for three years does he once mention Krupskaya: "Nadia is ill: she caught bronchitis and has a fever. It seems she will have to toss about in bed for a while. To-day I called a woman doctor."

Several letters sound a rare note akin to self-pity and search for sympathy: how hard his life is, how unending and ungrateful his factional struggles, how dumb even the best Bolsheviks can be. Thus in the earliest letter from Krakow to Paris in December, 1913, he tells her that he is receiving protests from offended party cells because he does not work through them but picks his own men of confidence for confidential tasks:

> Clowns! They chase after words. Don't think how devilishly complicated and tricky life is, which *provides altogether new forms*....
>
> People for the most part (99 per cent. of the bourgeoisie, 98 per cent. of the Liquidators, some 60 to 70 per cent. of the Bolsheviks) are unable to *think*, only able to *learn words by heart*. They have learned by heart the word "underground." Good. They can repeat it. This they know by rote.
>
> But *how its forms* must be changed under new circumstances, how one must learn *anew* for this, and how to *think*, that we do not understand....
>
> I am greatly interested in knowing whether you could explain this to the public. Write me in the greatest detail....

No doubt in this "dialectical" and "statistical" analysis of the class ability to think there is something intentionally comic, but the complaint is serious all the same, and flattering in its implication that Inessa is one who can not only think but perhaps write a pamphlet that will teach other Bolsheviks how to think.

THE YEAR 1916 was a bitter, quarrelsome year for Lenin. "Never, I think," wrote Krupskaya, "was Vladimir Il'ich in a more irreconcilable mood than during the last months of 1916 and the early months of 1917." "He had differences of opinion with Rosa Luxemburg, Radek, the Dutch, Bukharin, Piatakov... and Kollontay," and even with his sister Anna. He wrote Inessa several letters full of abusive reproaches of comrades who were closest to him, and apparently she reproved him in reply.

But just at that point, Maxim Gorky, who at his request was trying to arrange the legal publication of Lenin's *Imperialism* in Petrograd, demanded that he omit some of the abusive epithets directed at Kautsky. This, Lenin wrote Inessa, was "ridiculous and offensive"; then he added: "There you are, that's fate. One fighting campaign after another—against political stupidities, vileness, opportunism, etc. And this from 1893 on. And the hatred of the philistines because of it. Well, all the same, I would not change my fate for 'peace' with the philistines...."

This is one of the rare autobiographical reflections we have from his usually extrovert pen.

HIS BIG OPPORTUNITY to use Inessa, as we have already noted, came when he sent her in his place to represent the Bolsheviks at the International Socialist Bureau conference called in Brussels on July 16th and 17th, 1914, to unify once more the Russian socialist movement. He was sending her to meet and do battle with such major figures as Kautsky, Vandervelde, Huysmans, Luxemburg, Plekhanov, Trotsky, and Martov. He counted on her mastery of all the languages of the International, her literal devotion to him and his

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

views, her steadfastness under fire. Apparently Zinoviev or some other close lieutenant found Lenin's confidence misplaced and thought Inessa too small for the task, so he wrote her:

> I am convinced that you are one of those who develops, grows stronger, becomes more energetic and bolder when alone in a responsible post. . . . I stubbornly disbelieve the pessimists who say that you—are hardly—nonsense and again nonsense! With a splendid tongue you will smash them all; you will not let Vandervelde interrupt you and yell. . . .[7]
>
> You must make the report. You will say that you demand it and that you *have* precise and practical *proposals*. What can be more practical and businesslike? We go our way, they theirs—and we'll see what happens. Either a general line is accepted or we say let's report to our congress, *we to the congress of our party*. (But in fact, it is clear, we will accept exactly nothing.)

After a great deal more in this vein, Lenin breaks into English, as he delights to do in his letters to this master of five languages:

> *I've forgotten the money question. We will pay for letters, telegrams (please wire oftener) & railroad expenses, hotel expenses & so on. Mind it!*
>
> *If you succeed to receive the first rapport for 1–2 hours, it is almost all.*
>
> Then it remains to "kick back," to fish out their *contrepropositions* (on all 14 points) and to declare *we do not agree* (not one of their proposals will we accept . . .).

In all the forty pages of instructions and *zametki privées*, although the time was nearly three weeks after the assassination of the Archduke at Sarajevo, Lenin has not one word to say about war, except his own war against all the other varieties of Russian socialism. Inessa, Krupskaya writes, was selected because it was necessary to have a firm person who could "resist a storm of indignation. . . . She carried out her task bravely." And the police agent's comment showed that she did so, to the "great disgust" of the I.S.B. representatives and those from the other Russian factions, "as no one had expected the impudence of the Leninists to reach such proportions."

To follow up Lenin's and their advantage, the police instructed all their secret agents in the underground "steadfastly and persistently to defend the idea of the complete impossibility of any organisation fusion whatsoever . . . especially a union of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks." Lenin, who was taking no chances either, determined not to attend the Emergency Session of the I.S.B. on July 29th, 1914, the day after Austria shelled Belgrade, for the sole purpose of trying to stop the war from spreading.

We turn now to three letters to Inessa, one written on June 5th, 1914, and the other two in December, 1916, which refer directly or indirectly to Inessa's preoccupation with the "woman question," her reading in this field, and her plan for a pamphlet.

The first deals with a novel by Vinenchenko, which Inessa had recommended to Lenin, then sent him to read. The novel was no doubt *Honesty with One's Self*, published in 1911 in the Fifth Yearly Almanac of *Zemlia*, St. Petersburg.

> "I have read, *my dear friend*,[8] the new novel by Vinenchenko which you sent. What a nonsensical and stupid story!
>
> To bring together as many "horrors" as possible of all kinds, to collect and unite both "vice" and "syphilis" and romantic villainy, with extortion of money for a secret (and the transformation of the blackmail victim into a mistress) and the trial of a doctor! All with hysterics, mental contortions, pretensions to a theory of "his own" on the organisation of prostitutes. . . .
>
> Coming singly, there are in life, of course, all the "horrors" which Vinenchenko depicts. But to join them all together. . . .
>
> Once I had to spend the night with a sick comrade (delirium tremens). And once I had to try to dissuade a comrade who was attempting suicide. In the end . . . he died a suicide. Both are memories *à la* Vinenchenko. But in each case these were fragments of the lives of the two comrades. But this pretentious, arrant fool of a Vinenchenko . . . has made this a collection of nothing but horrors. . . . Brrr—dullness, nonsense, unpleasant to have spent time in reading it.

A glance at the novel will convince the reader that Lenin was the better critic and that Inessa's interest was largely due to the author's "own theory on the organisation of prostitutes."

Unfortunately, Inessa's letter outlining her plan for a pamphlet on the "woman's question" has not been published. But from Lenin's letters we can see that she had included among her list of "immediate demands" the "demand for free love." Pedantically, dogmatically, but with an effort to be tactful and gentle, Lenin sought to persuade her to strike it out. "This is really not a proletarian but a bourgeois demand," he writes in his first letter. "What *can* be understood by it?" Answering his own question, he enumerates ten possible interpretations:

> (1) Freedom from material calculations in the matter of love? (2) From material cares also? (3) From religious prejudices? (4) From prohibitions by papa, etc.? (5) From the prejudices of "society"? (6) From a narrow environment (peasant or petit-bourgeois-intellectual)? (7) From the fetters of law, the courtroom, and the police? (8) From the serious in love? (9) From childbirth? (10) Freedom of adultery?

---

[7] This did not prevent Lenin from writing out for her every word she was to say, and supplementing this with four sets of *zametki privées* (private notes). The report and instructions he wrote for her take up forty pages in Vol. XX of his *Sochineniya* (4th ed.; Moscow, 1941–52).

[8] English in the original. Where the editors have not omitted the salutation and closing, Lenin generally writes *Dorogoi Drug* (Dear Friend) and closes with "firmly (or "firmly, firmly") I press your hand." In one letter he puts this into English as "Friendly shake hands!"

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Of course, you have in mind not Nos. 8–10 but Nos. 1–7... But for numbers 1–7 you must select another term, for free love does not exactly express this thought. And the public will *inevitably* understand by "free love" Nos. 8–10, just for the reason that it is not a proletarian but a bourgeois demand.... It is not a matter of what you "want to understand" *subjectively* by it. It is a matter of the *objective logic* of class relations in matters of love.

Something in Lenin's letter—perhaps his remark on "freedom of adultery"—must have hurt Inessa deeply. In reply to her protest, not available to us, he defends his "class analysis" of love:

Good, let us examine the question once more....

You "object": [you say] "I don't understand how it is POSSIBLE to identify (!!??) free love" with No. 10. So it seems that it is *I* who do the "identifying" and you are getting ready to scold... *me*?

*Bourgeois women* understand by free love pts. 8–10—that is my thesis. Do you reject that? Then tell me what *bourgeois* ladies do understand by free love?... Don't literature and life *prove* that? You must *mark yourself off* clearly from them, *oppose* to theirs the proletarian point of view.... Otherwise *they* will seize upon the corresponding points of your pamphlet, interpret them in their own way, make of your pamphlet water for their mill, pervert your thoughts before the workers, "confuse" the workers (by sowing among them the fear that the ideas *you* bring may be *alien* to them). And in their hands are the powerful hosts of the press.

But, you, completely forgetting the objective and class point of view, pass over to an "attack" on *me*, as if it were *I* who "identify" free love with pts. 8–10. Strange, verily, verily, strange....

Lenin seems to sense that this pedantic self-exculpation does not touch the core of her hurt, so he tries another approach:

"Even a temporary passion and love affair"—so you write—is "more poetical and clean" than "kisses without love" of vulgar, and worse than vulgar, spouses. [The words I have rendered with "vulgar and worse than vulgar" are *poshlyi* (vulgar) and *poshlenkii*, a pejorative diminution of the same word.—B.W.] So you write. And so you are getting ready to write in your pamphlet. Splendid.

Is the contraposition logical? Kisses without love, of vulgar spouses, is *dirty*. I agree. To this must be counterposed—what? It would seem: kisses *with love*?

But you counterpose "temporary" (why temporary?) "passion" (why not love?). Logically it turns out as if kisses without love (temporary) are opposed to kisses without love (conjugal).... Strange. For a popular pamphlet, would it not be better to oppose to middle-class-intellectual-peasant vulgar and dirty marriage without love—proletarian, civil marriage with love (with the addition, IF YOU ABSOLUTELY INSIST, that a temporary affair-passion may also be dirty or clean)....

Truly I do not want to engage in a polemic with you at all. Gladly would I throw this letter away and postpone the matter until we can have a talk together.

But I did want your pamphlet to be a good one, so that from it *no one would be able* to rip out a phrase unpleasant for you.... I am sending you this letter only that you may perhaps re-examine your plan in more detail, as a result of letters, than on the occasion of a chat. A plan, you see, is a very important thing....

The pamphlet was never written!

INESSA CONTINUED TO PLAY an important part in Lenin's wartime activities. She served on the Bolshevik delegations to Zimmerwald and Kienthal. At the Berne Conference of Bolsheviks, she was one of a committee of three, the other two being Zinoviev and Lenin, which drafted the official resolution on war. (There is no doubt that the real author was Lenin.) She continued to lead the Bolshevik work among women. Despite her age—she was thirty-five in 1914—she represented Bolshevism at the International Youth Conference. She became one of the founders and a foreign editor of the Petersburg legal Bolshevik journal, *The Woman Worker*, the other editors being Kollontay (who agreed with her on "free love"), Liliana Zinoviev, Krupskaya, Lydia Stal, and Lenin's sister Anna.

Inessa was on the "sealed train" that took Lenin and his wife, the Zinovievs, and other prominent Bolsheviks back to Russia. Thereafter Lenin's life in the maelstrom of revolution, and hers, scarcely less agitated and active, in woman's work, work among French Communists and sympathisers in Russia, activities as first chairman of the Economic Council of Moscow Province, editor of the Woman's Section of *Pravda* and *Bednota*, her struggle against the ubiquitous prostitution of the years of civil war and economic breakdown, her translation work at two congresses of the Comintern—the churning whirlpool of revolution left little time for these two to think of themselves or each other.

The descriptions of her dating from this period agree that she dressed plainly, carelessly, even neglectfully, in worn and shabby garments; that she was ill-fed, often cold and hungry; that her face had begun to show the ravages of overwork and neglect of self. At last, her friends and comrades, frightened by the signs of physical breakdown, persuaded her to go to the Caucasus for a rest. There too was hunger, overcrowding, floods of refugees, civil war, breakdown, disease. She slept in freight cars, was carried from town to town, and nursed the sick on the train. At last she was struck down herself by typhus in the autumn of 1920, dying at the age of forty-one.

WHEN ALEXANDRA KOLLONTAY, then serving as ambassador to Norway, died in 1952, Marcel Body, a

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

French Communist who had been in Inessa's group in Moscow and then served as aide, intimate friend, and first secretary of Kollontay's embassy, wrote a memoir concerning the first woman ambassador in history. In the memoir he told how Kollontay had spoken to him of Lenin's deep love for Inessa Armand.[9] Krupskaya had known of it, she said, and in line both with the principles instilled in her by Chernyshevsky's "uncommon persons" in *Chto delat'?*, and the principles expressed in another favourite tale of Lenin's, "The Story of Kolosov," by Turgenev,[10] Krupskaya had bravely faced the thought that her husband would now leave her for Inessa. When he did not go, she offered to leave. More than once, she signified her intention of leaving, but each time Lenin said to her, "No, stay!" Dutifully, she stayed.

After Body published this memoir, Angelica Balabanoff felt that she too might break the puritanical silence she had hitherto observed concerning Inessa in my many interviews with her on what she knew of Lenin.

> Lenin loved Inessa [Dr. Balabanoff told me]. There was nothing immoral in it, since Lenin told Krupskaya everything [again the same code]. He deeply loved music, and this Krupskaya could not give him. Inessa played beautifully—his beloved Beethoven and other pieces.
>
> He sent Inessa to the Youth Conference of the Zimmerwald Group—a little old, but she had a credential from the Bolsheviks and we had to accept it. He did not dare to come himself, sat downstairs in a little adjacent café drinking tea, getting reports from her, giving her instructions. I went down for tea and found him there. Did you come *na chai*, I asked, *ili na rezoliutsii*? (for tea, or for the resolutions?) He laughed knowingly, but did not answer. [Inessa fought hard, but the resolution Lenin prepared for her was defeated 13-3.]
>
> When Inessa died, he begged me to speak at her funeral. He was utterly broken by her death. She died miserably of typhus in the Caucasus. I did not want to speak because I did not feel close to her nor really know her well. Yet I did not want to refuse.
>
> Fortunately, at the last moment, Kollontay arrived, and delivered a moving address. I cast sidelong glances at Lenin. He was plunged in despair, his cap down over his eyes; small as he was, he seemed to shrink and grow smaller. He looked pitiful and broken in spirit. I never saw him look like that before. It was something more than the loss of a "good Bolshevik" or a good friend. He had lost someone very dear and very close to him and made no effort to conceal it.
>
> He had had a child by Inessa. She married the German Communist, Eberlein, who was purged by Stalin. What happened to Lenin's daughter then I do not know.[11]

This last belief of Dr. Balabanoff, which I heard also from Germans who had known Hugo Eberlein well, is nevertheless mistaken. When Inessa died, the Ulianovs adopted her daughter, Ina, and took her to live with them. It was at Lenin's home that Eberlein met Ina Armand, but she would have been too young to have been at a nubile age then if she had really been a daughter of Lenin and Inessa, whose personal acquaintance dates from

---

[9] Marcel Body, "Alexandra Kollontay," in *Preuves* (Paris), April, 1952. Body was a French workingman, a printer in Limoges. Mobilised in 1914, he was sent to Russia with a French military mission to the Russian army. Like a number of other men of that mission (Captain Jacques Sadoul, hitherto a Right Socialist, for example), he sympathised with the February and October Revolutions. Remaining in Russia, he joined first Inessa's group of French Communists in Moscow, then the Russian party, and served the Soviet government in various capacities. When Kollontay arrived in Oslo as the world's first woman ambassador in 1922, a kind of honorific exile by Lenin for her activity in the Workers Opposition, she found Body there as secretary to Ambassador Suritz. His friendship with her and his service under her began then and lasted until her death. Sickened, as she was too, by Stalin's purges, he did not return to Russia and now lives in Paris.

[10] "Kolosov" is the hero of a short tale by Turgenev, which Lenin cherished as a discussion of the proper attitude of the "uncommon person" towards love. Krupskaya told Valentinov that when they were in Siberia, she and her husband translated several pages of the tale into German. (This was Lenin's method of improving his German and at the same time becoming more deeply acquainted with some of his favourite pages from literature.) Kolosov, the narrator of the tale says, fell in love with a girl, lost his love for her and left her. In this there was nothing "unusual." Unusual was the resoluteness with which he broke with her and with his whole past as tied up with her:

> "Which of us would have been able to break in good time with his past? Who, say, who does not fear reproaches—not, I say, the reproaches of the woman but the reproaches of the first stupid bystander? Which of us would not yield to the desire to play the magnanimous, or egotistically to play with another devoted heart? Finally, which of us has the strength to oppose petty selfishness, petty proper feelings: pity and remorse? Oh, gentlemen, a person who breaks with a woman once loved, at that bitter and great moment when he involuntarily realises that his heart is no longer entirely filled by her, that person, believe me, better and more deeply understands the sacredness of love than do those faint-hearted people who from tedium, from weakness, continue to play on the half-broken strings of their flabby and sentimental hearts. We all called Andrei Kolosov an uncommon man. . . . In certain years, to be natural means to be uncommon."

[11] The writer interviewed Angelica Balabanoff many times concerning Lenin during her years in America, but she never hinted at the Inessa affair until I said to her in Rome that I had learned of it from Marcel Body. Then she told me the above, permitting me to take notes as she talked.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1910.[12] (Eberlein married for the second time in Moscow in 1921.)

For the rest, Kollontay's account and Balabanoff's confirm each other. The account of Kollontay reads: "When her body was brought from the Caucasus and we accompanied her to the cemetery, Lenin was unrecognisable. He walked with closed eyes; at every moment we thought he would collapse." Always the romantic, Kollontay added: "He was not able to go on living after Inessa Armand. The death of Inessa hastened the development of the sickness which was to destroy him."

Be that as it may (he managed to continue active political life for two extremely full years, then died in the same way as his father, whom he so greatly resembled, at almost the same age), both accounts make it clear that Lenin deeply loved Inessa and that her death affected him profoundly. As Dr. Balabanoff put it, "It was something more than the loss of a 'good Bolshevik' or a good friend."

John Reed died in the same way that same autumn. One of the first native Americans to take part in the founding of the American Communist Party, he had written *Ten Days That Shook the World*, which Lenin pronounced the best account of his seizure of power and the most useful, deserving of translation into all languages. Yet, when Kobetsky, then technical secretary of the Comintern, reported to Lenin that John Reed was dead, Lenin, always a great one for getting on with the work regardless of losses, answered:

*Comrade Kobetsky!*

1. Your report (*i.e.*, the report of the physician you sent me) and the note should be sent abroad.
2. Who is in charge of the Hotel Lux? Its remodelling for the Comintern? The management part?

*Lenin* 18/X

Both good comrades had "served the cause." Both were buried under the Kremlin Wall between the Nikolsky and Spassky gates. But what a world of difference in the emotion Lenin showed.

To KRUPSKAYA FELL THE TASK of writing the obituary notice for the Woman's Section of *Pravda*, on October 3rd, 1920. She tried hard to summon up a sense of loss, but the obituary is formless and colourless. In time, however, this devoted woman learned to accept this aspect of her husband's life, like every other, as part of a paradigm of perfection. In 1926, Krupskaya edited and wrote the opening article of a symposium brochure, *In Memory of Inessa Armand*. It is the warmest and most informative essay in the collection. When in 1930–32 she came to write her *Memories of Lenin*, the personality of Inessa shone through its pages, radiant and joyous, as Lenin saw her. Thus perhaps it was Krupskaya, even more than Inessa and Lenin, who deserved the appellation of "uncommon person" used alike by Chernyshevsky and Turgenev in their discussions of freedom in love. Whatever may have been their reason, it was no longer Krupskaya's personal sensitiveness that motivated the Marx-Lenin Institute in waiting for her death before publishing the letters of Lenin to Inessa Armand. But the officials of the Institute did not know Krupskaya's spirit well enough to be aware of the change.

PERHAPS WE SHOULD ADD a footnote on the subsequent lives of the family of Inessa Armand. Her husband, after the loss of his fortune, entered "agriculture," working in a kolkhoz until his death in 1943. Her oldest son, Alexander, fought in the Civil War, and in 1957 was reported to be working in the Thermotechnical Institute in Moscow. Fedor, her second son, was a military aviator, then engaged in the organisation of athletics, until his death of tuberculosis in 1936. The youngest son, André, became an engineer and tank constructor. He died in battle in 1944.

The older daughter, Ina, lost her German Communist husband in the Stalin blood purges. In 1957 she was working in the Marx-Lenin Institute. The younger daughter, Varvara, is a "decorative artist." At least, such is the account given in the official French Communist biography of Inessa Armand. (All except the marriage to Eberlein and his subsequent purge, for unpersons did not then get into official biographies.)

*Bertram D. Wolfe*

[12] Singularly, all of the Ulianov family of Lenin's generation, his sisters Anna and Maria, his brother Dmitrii, and Lenin himself, remained childless.

**Previous Convictions**

**CYRIL CONNOLLY**

"Width and elegance of style . . . a cohesive whole and a fascinating book . . . an immensely amusing man . . . achieves profundity to an astonishing degree."—*B.B.C. Critics*

"It is wonderful that occasional journalism should be so enjoyable and so rewarding at a second reading."
—*Times Literary Supplement*

"One of those writers of whom one would not willingly miss a word."
—GAVIN EWART (*London Magazine*)

"At whetting our appetite for a writer in a couple of pages, Mr. Connolly has no equal."—*The Times*

*414 pages 30s*

**HAMISH HAMILTON**


PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# LETTERS

## Keynes

As AN old friend of Maynard Keynes, I should like to thank you for Professor Robert Lekachman's article in the December ENCOUNTER. It is incomparably the best thing that has ever been written about him.

WALTER LIPPMANN

*Washington, D.C.*

## An Afrikaner View

I HAVE ONLY now received the copy of ENCOUNTER which contains Mr. Mander's article. To my mind it is, on the whole, an objective analysis and fair interpretation of the South African situation. I might draw your attention to the following points:

It is an exaggeration to speak of five million urbanised Africans. It is, of course, very difficult to define the latter term, but I have estimated the number at fewer than three millions, in the sense of a "settled" urban community born in the urban centres or settled there as family units or individuals committed to urban wage labour without any obligation or propensity to return to the Tribal Homes periodically to help with the planting and harvesting of crops.

The solution proposed by Afrikaner intellectuals did not "amount to a forcible re-tribalisation." The very opposite is true. Urbanisation, and a concomitant metamorphosis of the African way of life have always been regarded as a *sine qua non* for economic development within the Bantu Areas if the latter are to become viable entities, the African himself assuming part of the responsibility and initiative. It is appreciated that the tribal, agrarian way of life cannot lead to self-generating growth. Even while some social anthropologists are unhappy about the social disorganisation which will result from industrialisation and urbanisation *within* the proposed Bantustans, economists regard *border* industrial development as inadequate as a means of creating fairly rapid economic development inside the Bantu Areas.

Mr. Mander's observation that the African proletariat of Johannesburg struck him as the most *visibly* wretched human community he had seen, lacks perspective. In the first place, poverty and even abject poverty, is a condition shared by a majority of the world's population. If he had travelled widely in the underdeveloped areas of the world he would have re-phrased, if not retracted, his statement. I have seen greater wretchedness in many parts of the world, and that includes some developed countries as well. In the second place, what he saw is not a function of the perversity of the government or of the White community. It is not the result of a racialist policy, but a sociological problem. These are the effects of urbanisation *per se*, when people are uprooted from their agrarian origins and injected into a completely foreign urban *milieu*, in which traditional values have been discarded, but a new set of generally accepted values have not yet been developed. Again, this is not a phenomenon peculiar to South Africa.

When he juxtaposes "a white nation, placid, powerful, insolent" and "a black nation, sullen, bitter, vengeful," I believe he bases his conclusion on a biased sample of the black nation. One has to distinguish between the vocal, urbanised African leaders and the masses of the population. The former are certainly sullen, bitter, and vengeful because they are most sensitive to the disabilities to which Africans are subjected. But the description will not fit the large majority, who are all of them undoubtedly dissatisfied to some degree or other, but have not given such conscious thought to politics as to turn them into a seething mass of sullen people. Most of them prefer to be left alone to provide for themselves and their families. Not that they are always allowed by militant leaders to do so. Among the Africans intimidation means that the alternative to compliance is death. If the African nation were all that sullen, bitter, and vengeful, it would have been fairly easy to organise mass movements, at least in the past. The lack of success which attended efforts in this direction has resulted in the formation of *Poqo*, which operated through small cells.

While the subversive activities of this organisation with its somewhat starry-eyed, power-thirsty leaders are being combated, the genuine grievances of the majority of the non-politically-minded Africans do not receive the required attention.

PROFESSOR J. L. SADIE

*University of Stellenbosch,*
*South Africa*

## John Mander's Reply

THE discussion of "partition" offered in my article on the South African situation [ENCOUNTER, October, 1963] has at least served to put the idea back into currency. The original article, as I hear, together with a gloss that appeared in *The Observer*'s "Pendennis" column in the week of publication, were both widely discussed in South Africa itself. A few days later, the idea was taken up in a *Guardian* leader, and a somewhat acrimonious correspondence ensued. Under attack from Ronald Segal, Patrick Duncan, Margaret Roberts, etc., however, the *Guardian* stuck to its guns. Of particular interest, perhaps, in view of Patrick Duncan's espousal of a "war of liberation" against *apartheid*, was the *Guardian*'s statement that "aggression was not justified by hatred of a political system." This echoed the view, expressed in my article, that South African liberals exhibit a trigger-



PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

happiness in regard to the South African situation which they would deplore if, say, East Germany or Tibet were under discussion. . . .

As regards my own article, I do not, on reflection, find much to add. The objections, physical and political, to any scheme of partition were pretty well set out in the course of my argument. To a great extent, then, I agree with—and indeed anticipated—the points made by critics like Duncan, Segal, and Legum. Where I differ from Mr. Duncan is in my estimate of the forces, political and military, that Black Africa will be able to deploy against *apartheid* during the next few years. Quite apart from the military issue, to which I have referred, I find Mr. Duncan's estimate unrealistic. He believes that when the "war of liberation" begins, the whole white position in South Africa will be swept away. If he is right, then there can clearly be no question of partition as some kind of "half-way house." But if he is wrong, if he over-estimates Black Africa's strength, as I think he does, then the likelihood of partition on the "Israeli model," as a political compromise arising from a military stalemate, is rather greater. And it was this assumption that underlay my thesis that partition might be "not what I would like to happen, but what is likely to happen."

One further point should be made. How far does Dr. Verwoerd himself accept the idea? Does he secretly cherish it, but fear to disclose it to his followers? Or is partition no more than a hair-brained notion of a few Stellenbosch professors? It is, of course, extremely difficult to judge this point. Briefly, however, my own view is this. What was little more than an intellectuals' plaything ten years back is to-day a widely, if clandestinely, discussed possibility. That Dr. Verwoerd does not talk of it openly is perfectly true, and Patrick Duncan is quite right in remarking that, if he did, his followers would "chase him back to Holland." I can only say that I reported accurately what Mr. Cillié had to say and that I did not have the feeling that Mr. Cillié, in explaining his ideas to me, was in any way speaking out of turn. My impression of Mr. Cillié was that he was a cautious man, well aware of the weight his words might be made to bear in the party and in the outside world. He did not, of course, claim that Dr. Verwoerd shared all his views, or that partition on the radical scale I envisaged was, either in the short or the long run, a foregone conclusion. But I have no reason to doubt that, in speaking to me as he did, he was expressing views that are being responsibly considered at a high level in the Afrikaner hierarchy. That is their interest to the outside world, and was the *raison d'être* of my article.

JOHN MANDER

*London*

## God & the Theologians

WILL HERBERG, in your November issue, begs rather a lot of questions. He quotes Robert Calhoun, "Religion is man's life in so far as it is defined by his supreme loyalty and devotion"; and he proceeds to assume that every man has some religion, albeit probably idolatrous. It doesn't follow. Some people have no supreme loyalty and devotion to anything.

Surely a man may trust scientific method (for instance) in some contexts without ascribing to it any universal or necessary authority. Christ had the faith to move mountains; he revived the dead, and walked on water; so perhaps we may concede that he needed no faith in scientific methods. Christians, on the other hand, assume that if they walk on water they will get wet, and in thousands of other situations they trust the validity of scientific observations. Does this mean that they elevate science to the level of Godhead? And if the Christian can believe in science without making of it a religion, why should not the atheist do the same?

Religion, I submit, is not only, or even mainly, *belief in action*; if it were, Christians would indeed be few and far between. It is much more a matter of intellectual and moral commitment. It is, of course, true that all men adopt beliefs of various kinds, whether moral, or intellectual, or merely superstitious. But for most men such beliefs are, exactly, working hypotheses. Some are rejected in the light of experience; others are never properly examined, and may even come to govern the life of the believer without his being aware of it. In any case, what a man believes in one context does not always prevent him from holding a contradictory belief in a different context. And belief on this level is not, in any commonly accepted sense of the word, religious. If Mr. Herberg really equates "belief" with "religion," he has no moral right to be with us at all: he should have killed himself long ago in defiance of the idolatrous belief in the force of gravity.

For my own part, I have a number of habitual assumptions that I cling to in certain situations; and I feel myself committed to these beliefs to very varying degrees from one day to the next. In many contexts I act and think as an atheist, and in others I act and think as a Christian. In a quite academic sort of way, I might even consider some of my beliefs worth dying for—though of course I might well change my mind if I actually had to do it. But even this doesn't mean very much: one is a slave to so many things, from the noblest principles to that cancerogenic weed; and I would not make a God of a thing only because I can't do without it.

JENS ARUP

*London*

## Wroclaw Today

ALTHOUGH I read with great pleasure Walter Laqueur on Wroclaw ["Homecoming," December ENCOUNTER], and realise that the very personal nature of the article was of its essence, it does give, I feel, a rather extraordinary impression to anybody who has got to know Wroclaw since the war. I was there many times during a recent extended stay

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Life & Letters Today

*London*

HISTORY *is full of the most outlandish ironies. Last June, as President Kennedy tried in Berlin to peer over the East-West frontier, a 24-year-old somewhat demented Texan, home only a year after having defected to Soviet Russia, borrowed a number of books from the New Orleans library, among them a book on "The Berlin Wall."*

*What kind of fanatic was this Lee Harvey Oswald? What ideas and prejudices raced through his over-heated brain? We will one day know at least a little more than we know now, but not much of it, I suspect, will fit into conventional patterns. He may well have been a Communist when he went to the Soviet Union, but the notes which he wrote about his bitter frustrating experiences were those of a disenchanted Marxist. He may well have sought in the image of Castro's Cuba an ideal of pure revolution. But what did he make of those other books he borrowed from the local library? The biography of Mao Tse-tung—another wild hope of terrestrial paradise? The study of "The Huey Long Murder Case"—the excitement of political adventure? The several critical books about Khrushchev and Communism—more painful mental confusion? And what did he conceivably take from those Ian Fleming novels he took home to read—an unnatural glow of melodrama and murder? And from the biographical portrait of President Kennedy—the target at last?...*

FORUM SERVICE

*Cape Town*

EVIDENCE *was given by a police lieutenant of the arrest of Dr. Neville Alexander, a Coloured doctor of philosophy, and of the seizure of documents said to have been found in his room including* Strategic Problems of the Anti-Japanese Guerilla War *by Mao Tse-tung*, The Paris Commune *by Lenin and* Yu Chi Chan Guerilla Warfare *by Mao-Tse-tung.*

*The Deputy Attorney-General, prosecuting, said that the law required all the documents to be read, and this would probably take several days. His assistant then started reading* Strategic Problems of the Anti-Japanese Guerilla War, *and this took up the remainder of to-day's hearing.*

THE TIMES

*London*

"THERE COULD BE," *said the radio yesterday, "a little snow here and there." "Snow showers," it said on Saturday, "could be prolonged."*

*Thus the B.B.C. catches up with current cant, which through substituting "could" for "may" or "might" weakens the language by blurring definition. It is now quite common to hear or see "could" used twice in one sentence with a different meaning each time.*

*Of all people, the B.B.C. should know better. But as yesterday it also said that "cycling past Woburn Abbey, a black squirrel ran across the road," the situation could now be hopeless.*

DAILY TELEGRAPH

*Prague*

IN *a discussion-evening here in Prague, Herr Fritz Selbmann, one of the leading Communist officials of Eastern Germany, was asked by a Western correspondent whether the East Berlin Wall hadn't created as many problems as it solved, indeed whether it hadn't created a "Mauerkomplex" among the people.*

*"Of course," Selbmann said, "there is a 'Wall complex.' If the Wall hadn't been built, there'd be many who would never think of going over. Recently a friend of mine came to me and said, 'Fritz, I'd like to get the Western newspapers.' And I said to him, 'But why do you want to read them, all that filth and dirt.' And he replied, 'I don't really want to read them at all! But if I did really want to read them, then I couldn't—and that bothers me.'..."*

DIE ZEIT

*Budapest*

THE UNCERTAIN *beliefs inherited from the older generation are still more confused by the influx of Western culture now represented in every public library by translations of the so-called angry young men and by the growing list of contemporary paperbacks which sell like hot cakes in the bookshops of Budapest.*

*Bewildered students note that their taste for "A Taste of Honey" was considered excessive and the production withdrawn, while Tennessee Williams continues to play to packed houses; they translate Robert Burns and Dylan Thomas with equal enthusiasm; one admires William Golding, another dismisses him as a Fascist.*

*Certainly the young people of Hungary will have an interesting future. Not the least interesting part of it, for us as well as for them, will be their attempt to resolve the conflicting ideals of Socialist morality and the confused values of Western culture. The extent of their confusion, as well as the refreshing quality of robust nobility with which these charming young people are facing their problems, was brought vividly home to me when my friend Janos' younger brother, looking as courageously vulnerable as only the young can look, said confidingly:*

*"Now I work for one year in an hotel to learn about men. Next year I go to the University to learn about letters. Later I wish to be a great writer like Shakespeare or John Osborne."*

THE GUARDIAN

*London*

THE ROBBINS REPORT *never (I think) says "Oxbridge" when it means Oxford and Cambridge. This unpleasant, and even tendentious, abbreviation [writes the President of Trinity College, Oxford] might be eliminated for ever if one of the new universities recommended in the report were, in fact, sited at Oxbridge—for there is a village of that name in Dorset.*

THE TIMES

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in Poland, and hope I may be able to correct (if he will permit the word) this impression a little.

The town does not look more German than many others in Poland. The Gothic brick churches are of a style which spread as far as Estonia in the north and Krakow in the south. Houses similar to those in the Glówny Rynek can be seen in Toruń and even Lublin. The piece of Baroque which I remember most is the hideous Aula of the university; apart from that I can think only of the Hala Ludowa and one or two other Hitler pieces, and the astonishing 1910 (?) slums in the southern part of the town. Admittedly there *is* more Hitler than Stalin; I believe that until about 1956 the government felt that its chances of holding on to Lower Silesia and Pomerania were not great enough for huge investments in building to be worth while. Wroclaw benefited from this, at least in its appearance, and the plans being put into action now may well make it a most beautiful city even within a generation.

True, Wroclaw is almost completely polonized, but the attitude of people towards the German language is quite different from that in Warsaw, for instance, where I felt almost too nervous to speak German in public places. When I first went to Wroclaw my Polish was still poor but people seemed quite happy to speak German if they could.

How I agree with Laqueur about the futility of trying to "prove" that Silesia is by "historic right" German or Polish. I am surprised how seldom the Poles seem to use what I think is the most effective argument on their side, namely that since the two nationalities can obviously never again live side by side, those whose homes are there at present should be allowed to stay there. Perhaps the Germans were done an injustice after the war in this, but now it is too late. And there does seem to be a good deal of reason behind Polish nervousness about German attitudes over the "lost provinces"!

There is in Laqueur's article one outrageous, breathtaking suggestion which somebody must refute: that there is now hardly any cultural activity in the city in comparison to before the war —"German Breslau was not only a bigger city than Polish Wroclaw, it was more orderly and prosperous," (so far so good) "it had a culture of its own and a certain character. But is it fair to compare the toughs from Carpathian mountain villages who now lounge about the Blücherplatz with the local intelligentsia of 1910...?" After this it is only a palliative to admit that there are 30 bookshops, six theatres and so on or that what went on during the Third Reich is perhaps not a good advertisement for German culture.

The point is that, as Laqueur himself says, the people of Wroclaw are very young; and the level —not merely the amount—of cultural activity among people up to 35 years of age is impressive. (This is not something I would say of Warsaw, incidentally, where even the local people are quite willing to admit that cultural life consists mainly of squabbles, intrigues and foreign travel.) It is quite true that some of these Wroclaw poets, painters and scientists look like Laqueur's toughs from Carpathian mountain villages, and I suppose he, being so much older than most of them, did not get a chance to look more closely. It is also quite true that the Wroclaw papers are *Käseblättchen*, and I do not know the people who run them. But the toughs in question produce some excellent things, particularly in the plastic arts (those famous Polish posters, and a lot of experimental work). The best exhibition I saw in Poland during my stay of some eight months was a collection of lithographs and copperplates by local people in Wroclaw, in the gallery at the corner of KDM. If one goes into the Piwnicka Świdnicka, the cellars of the town hall, during the day (in the evening it is reserved for young workers) one will find a crowd of students looking, for my money, very much like their counterparts in Paris or even Cambridge. Here, then, is a lively culture, though somewhat hampered by Warsaw's monopoly of the official patronage usually necessary in a communist country. When I once related in Wroclaw how a certain famous physicist in Warsaw had managed to "arrange" (*załatwić*) a passport for one of his people to go to a conference in America in the course of only eight days, I was met with stares of incomprehension. In Wroclaw they would have had to go through the usual channels and it would have taken at least two months.

So all this cultural life has to go on under its own steam; perhaps this is why Mr. Laqueur did not see it. Unlike him, I am inclined to judge Wroclaw on the basis of what it would be like to live there now, and I find I might rather like it. I have no interest in the matter; I am neither Pole nor Jew, Communist nor Kremlinologist.

MICHAEL BROIDO

*Trinity College,*
*Cambridge*

I AM GLAD that report on Wroclaw has given Mr. Broido an opportunity to add some observations of his own about a city he knows and likes. My account is naturally based on my own personal memories and impressions. I am not surprised that another traveller, unburdened by such memories, should see the city in a somewhat different light. I have therefore no quarrel with Mr. Broido, who, I duly note, is neither Jew nor Pole, neither Communist nor Kremlinologist. On two occasions he has however misunderstood me—the expression *"Käseblättchen"* refers, of course, to the pre-1933 German newspapers. The comparison between toughs from Carpathian villages and the German intelligentsia of 1910 was made not by me, but by some German writers with whom I disagreed. It is less than fair to attribute to me views against which I polemicised. Nor did I anywhere suggest that there is now no cultural activity. Mr. Broido thinks he might rather like to live in present-day Wroclaw—on balance I would prefer Cambridge. I hesitate to say this because Mr. Broido may again draw far-reaching political conclusions from what is intended quite unpolitically.

WALTER LAQUEUR

*London*

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Disarmament and Arms Control

This new international quarterly is committed not to any one policy, but to the discussion of the problems of disarmament, and where necessary to the creation of the language for discussion

*Executive Editor:* Wayland Young

*Editorial Board*—Dr. Donald Brennan, New York. The Hon. Alastair Buchan, London. Professor Bernard T. Feld, M.I.T. Professor Henry A. Kissinger, Harvard. Professor Sir Neville Mott, Cambridge.

*British Editorial Advisers:* Professor P. M. S. Blackett. Sir Edward Bullard. Sir John Cockcroft. Professor Alex Haddow. Professor Michael Howard. Dr. John C. Kendrew. Captain B. H. Liddell-Hart. The Rt. Hon. P. Noel-Baker. Sir David Ormsby-Gore. The Rt. Hon. K. G. Younger.

*Contents of the first issues include:*

The United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency – William C. Foster. The Road to Disarmament – Academician V. A. Kirillin. Cheating in a Disarmed World – Robert Neild. Regional Disarmament: Africa – J. H. Mensah. Extending the Nuclear Test Ban – Sir John Cockcroft. Switzerland and Disarmament – Urs Schwartz. The Geneva Negotiations as Constituent Assembly – Gian Paolo Tozzoli

To: Pergamon Press, Headington Hill Hall, Oxford.

Please send me a sample copy of one of the first issues of Disarmament and Arms Control. I undertake to send 10/– for this issue unless I return it within 7 days, in which case I owe nothing

Name.....

Address.....

.....


## *AUTHORS*

**Roy Jenkins,** who was a close personal friend and political associate of Hugh Gaitskell, is M.P. for Stechford. His essay is part of a tribute to Mr. Gaitskell's memory which has been edited by W. T. Rodgers (one of the leaders in the Gaitskellite "Campaign for Democratic Socialism"). Among the other contributors to the volume which is about to be published by Thames & Hudson are Lord Attlee, John Betjeman, Sir Maurice Bowra, Margaret Cole, Professor Michael Postan, Douglas Jay, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., and Willy Brandt....

**Lawrence Alloway** is at present Curator of the Guggenheim Museum in New York City. He has been a well-known English art critic, lecturer at the Tate Gallery and programme director of the Institute of Contemporary Arts. He was born in London (1926). From time to time he has written about the cinema (see "Monster Films," in ENCOUNTER, January, 1960)....

**Ezekiel Mphahlele** is the well-known African writer. When he was forced to leave South Africa, he lived and taught for several years in Nigeria. He is now living in East Africa, and among his novels is *Down Second Avenue* (Faber, 1959). More recently a book of his essays has appeared entitled *The African Image* (Faber, 1962)....

**Ernst Halperin** is one of the leading foreign correspondents of the Swiss press. He reported from Belgrade during the '50s, and is the author of an authoritative study of Tito called *Triumphant Heretic* (Heinemann, 1958). He spent many years in Vienna and then in Warsaw, writing on East European and Soviet affairs. Recently, he has been spending most of his time in Latin America, having visited Castro's Cuba a number of times and taken up residence in Santiago, Chile.

### INDEX TO VOLUME XXI

The Index to Volume XXI (July–December, 1963) is now available and will be sent, free of charge, on application to ENCOUNTER, 25 Haymarket, London, S.W.1. Standing orders for future indexes can also be accepted.

Readers who have previously placed a standing order need not apply again, as they will receive the new index automatically. If the index is being sent to the wrong address or the service is no longer required, please let us know.


The editorial and business offices of ENCOUNTER are at 25 Haymarket, London S.W.1. A stamped addressed envelope (English stamp) or international reply coupons should accompany MSS, otherwise they cannot be returned. For subscription details please see page 1.

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED, LONDON AND BECCLES



PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*Just published*

# John Strachey

## THE CHALLENGE OF DEMOCRACY

Shortly before his death last summer, John Strachey arranged with *Encounter* for the publication of these lectures, a companion piece to *The Great Awakening* (also available, same price). This powerful argument for democratic government is now issued as an *Encounter* pamphlet.

*3s. 6d. (50 cents) a copy*
*3s. 10d. (54 cents) including postage*

*An Encounter pamphlet available from*
ENCOUNTER 25 HAYMARKET LONDON SW1

# LONDON LIBRARY

*14 St James's Square, London, SW1*

700,000 books on all subjects except legal, medical and scientific

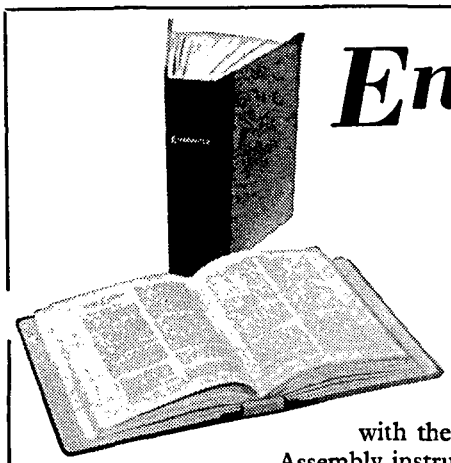
Annual subscription: 10 guineas

Members who qualify under Section 16 of the Finance Act 1958 may obtain income tax relief

Scholars and students unable to meet the full subscription may be helped by the Carlyle Trust

London members: 10 books at a time
Country members: 15 books at a time

NO ENTRANCE FEE
NO WAITING LIST



# *Encounter* BINDER

The ENCOUNTER Easibinder enables readers, for half the cost of full binding, to preserve their copies in an attractive and durable format. Each copy of the magazine, as received, can be quickly inserted in the case and secured there. Copies can just as easily be removed.

The binder holds six copies. It is strongly made with stiff covers, bound in maroon and grey cloth, with the title of the magazine blocked in gold on the spine. Assembly instructions are included with each binder.

The ENCOUNTER Easibinder costs 13/– or $2.00, including the cost of packing and posting by surface mail to any address in the world. There is no trade discount.

***ORDER BY COUPON OR SIMILAR LETTER***

*To* **ENCOUNTER (Binder), 25 HAYMARKET, LONDON S.W.1**
Please send.....ENCOUNTER Easibinder(s). I enclose cheque/P.O. for.....(13/– or $2.00 per binder).
NAME.....
ADDRESS.....
.....

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# ENCOUNTERS

Edited by

STEPHEN SPENDER

IRVING KRISTOL

MELVIN J. LASKY

with an introduction by

D. W. BROGAN

★ "*Encounter*'s tenth anniversary anthology confirms a brilliant editorial achievement; what started as a Little Magazine is now very much more than that. Indeed, it is on the way to becoming a contemporary institution... Apart from the sheer weight of virtuosity among its contributors, perhaps *Encounter*'s most attractive characteristic has been generosity of spirit – a refusal, normally speaking, to succumb to that introverted niggliness and sourness which often seems to characterise the British intellectual scene..." *New Society.*

★ "This anthology reminds us of *Encounter*'s admirable catholicity.... Famous pieces reappear—Berlin on Herzen, Wayland Young on prostitutes, Nancy Mitford on U and non-U, Mary McCarthy on her political past, and Edward Shils on British intellectuals; Arthur Koestler's 'Trail of the Dinosaur' and Auden's 'The Fallen City'. There is some very good poetry by some of the best poets of our time... A volume which shows our civilisation in such a lively, humane and ingenious light".

PHILIP TOYNBEE in *The Observer.*

★ "It is very good indeed and can stand on its own merits as a selection of representative contemporary writing... Where the anthology scores is where the magazine itself has always scored—in its array of autobiographical and critical essays. The best are very fine".

WALTER ALLEN in the *New York Times Book Review.*

ENCOUNTERS is published by **Weidenfeld & Nicolson** in England at 42s; and in America by **Basic Books** at $8.50. It is available only through booksellers, with whom orders should be placed.

PRODUCED 2003 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED